Epameinondas the Great

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Abstract

Epameinondas the great Theban general and politician (c. 318/312-362 B.C.) deserves credit for crippling the might of Sparta, founding the independent polis of Messenia and advancing the Boeotian League to the foremost position of power in all of Greece. It is then rather surprising that not a single dedicated monograph has been published in English on the general. With this thesis I hope to remedy the situation by providing a detailed and exhaustive account of Epameinondas’ life and career. Such a task is made difficult since the surviving source material for the early to the middle of the fourth century predominantly focuses on the affairs of Athens and Sparta. However, once information on Thebes has been isolated a continuous narrative may be comprehended, which uplifts the veil on an obscure portion of history. As a result it is possible to produce a detailed analysis of Epameinondas’ role in the government and his development of a federal league of states led by the Thebans. Along with this his military endeavours are examined in great detail with a close inspection of the relevant topographies of each respective area.
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**BNJ**  Worthington I. (ed.) *Brill’s New Jacoby* (Online).


Introduction

The great Theban statesman and general, Epameinondas, was indisputably one of the most important figures of his day. It was not merely his ability to win battles, his philosophical intellect, or his disinclination to imperial designs that distinguished him, but how dramatically the shape of the Hellenic Mediterranean world changed during his brief but incomparable career. Following the Peloponnesian War, the Spartans reigned supreme driven by the limitless ambition of King Agesilaus, whose impositions in Boeotia provoked the budding Theban statesman, among others, to fight back with the utmost determination. By crippling the Spartans’ military might, freeing many thousands of slaves and emancipating their most productive land, Epameinondas, all but vanquished the most powerful people in the Greek world. But after his death, in many ways, mainland Greece was exhausted by incessant warfare, paving the way for Macedonian superiority. It is arguable that, if it were not for Epameinondas, Philip of Macedon would never have risen to power as dramatically as he did.

In spite of his significance, Epameinondas is today a relatively obscure figure, almost entirely unknown to the general public. In contrast, by ancient observers he was most assuredly considered equal in greatness to the likes of Alexander the Great or Julius Caesar. Plutarch refers to him as Epameinondas the Great (Ἐπαμεινώνδα τοῦ μεγάλου) and Cicero more than once measures him as the best of the Greeks. However, following the fourth century A.D. there is not a single extant reference until the tenth century, when he is mentioned a few times in the Suda. Then, following a minor reference in the eleventh century by Michael Psellus, there is again a complete dearth until the sixteenth century. This can generally be explained by the lack of knowledge of ancient Greek in western Europe during the Medieval period. But, after the Renaissance the Theban general, along with many other ancient figures, received a reinvigoration of interest, particularly through the intellectual prowess of the likes of Erasmus and Michel de Montaigne. The latter even compared him with Alexander and Caesar, considering him to be the greatest of the three due to his personal

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1 Plut. An Seni 8/788a; Cic. Off. 1. 2; Fin. 2. 19.
virtues. In spite of his obscurity, from the sixteenth century until today Epameinondas’ influence can be observed in a number of non-historical works of literature, and by several important historical figures, including General George S. Patton, who, at the age of seventeen, wrote, “Epaminondas was without doubt the best and one of the greatest Greeks who ever lived, without ambition, with great genius, great goodness, and great patriotism; he was for the age in which he lived almost a perfect man”.

As shall be examined below, there has been some 400 years of academic writing on Epameinondas and one may query the value of producing another exhaustive analysis of the general’s life and career. However, there has not been a dedicated study for over 60 years and the best work on Epameinondas is now nearly 120 years old and was confined to the space of a large *Realencyclopädie* article. It is usually thought that his current obscurity is likely due to the loss of Plutarch’s *Epameinondas* and the Spartan- and Athenian-centric nature of our surviving sources. But, in recent decades, a number of relevant publications have greatly improved our understanding of the overall period in question; many of these focus on Boeotian and (non-Spartan) Peloponnesian affairs significant to his activities. In addition to this, a growing body of archaeological, epigraphic and numismatic evidence is continually offering further insights that allow us to examine the topic in much greater detail than has ever before been possible. Because of these factors an updated monograph on Epameinondas is overdue and will serve to improve our understanding of his role and impact upon events during the first half of the fourth century B.C.

*History of Epameinondan Scholarship*

By the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries there was a surge in academic studies on Epameinondas. The earliest example was by Simon Goulart, published in a 1602 edition of Thomas North’s English translations of Jacques Amyot’s French translations of Plutarch’s *Lives.* The work was a fabricated *Life* meant to remedy the loss of Plutarch’s *Epameinondas,*

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2 See Appendix I.
3 As quoted in Hanson (1999), 283.
4 Hanson (2010), 113 n. 2.
5 North (1602), 1-18.
relying predominantly on Nepos and the scattered references in Plutarch. Goulart heavily praises the virtues of the general, emphasizing his superiority over all other Greeks and that the Thebans could not sustain their greatness without him. This is hardly an original point of view but one that would continue well into the nineteenth century. While Goulart’s work may rightly be considered a work of biography the general’s earliest appearance in historical writing is perhaps the brief overview in Sir Walter Raleigh’s *History of the World*, which was originally published in 1614. This heavily didactic work was intended to instruct Henry, Prince of Wales and was conceived of as a universal history, though Raleigh was forced to conclude his work after only five books. His writing displays a thorough contempt for monarchs and tyrants throughout history and the relevant passages on Epameinondas are steeped in praise, concluding that he was “the worthiest man that ever was bred in that Nation of Greece”.  

Later we find Johann Heinrich Boecler’s brief assessment of Epameinondas in volume two of his *Dissertationes Academicae*, which was first published in 1644 and reprinted as late as 1710. Boecler derived most of his information from Nepos’ *Epaminondas* and was therefore most interested in the Theban general’s virtuous character traits, very much in the classic Plutarchean biographical manner. Then, in 1665, the puritan clergyman, Samuel Clarke, published a *Life* of the general paired with one of Hannibal. This account continued the tradition of his fellow Englishmen Goulart and Raleigh, with some clear indications that he made use of their work.

By the eighteenth century interest in Epameinondas had transferred over the channel to the French school, particularly at the *Académie française* and the *Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, both located at the *Institut de France* in Paris. This may have begun in 1724 with the soldier and tactician, Chevalier de Folard, whose interest in massed infantry columns (*ordre profond*), led him to include descriptions of the battles of Leuctra and Mantinea in his *Nouvelles découvertes sur la guerre dans une dissertation sur Polybe*, in which he also provided perhaps the first published engravings of the Epameinondan order of battle. Folard tells us that he had the honour of explaining this use of columns to Philippe II, the Duke of Orléans and regent of France, who had died about a year before the work was

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6 Raleigh (1687), 442.
7 Boecler (1710), 443-465.
8 Clarke (1665), 67-137.
published. The Duke apparently appeared surprised at these dispositions. The following decade would see the zenith of French academic interest on the topic when, sometime in the 1730s, Nicolas Gédoyn, who was known for his translations of Quintillian and Pausanias, presented a lecture at the Institut exhorting the most distinguished achievements of the Theban but, without the intent of offering an exhaustive account, he relied mostly on Pausanias. Apparently the presentation was well received and met with appropriate applause. However, his brief account would only be published posthumously in 1745. We also find a short appraisal of the Theban ascendency, with particular adoration for Epameinondas, in the fifth volume of Charles Rollin’s Histoire Ancienne (1738), in which he expresses agreement with Folard’s contention of Epameinondas as one of the greatest generals. In 1737 Charles-Irénée Castel de Saint-Pierre published a comparison between Epameinondas and Scipio Africanus, presumably to help alleviate the loss of such a comparison that Plutarch surely wrote. Finally, the natural culmination of this scholarly interest was realized when Henri François d’Aguesseau, the Chancellor of France, followed by Saint-Pierre, both encouraged Seran de La Tour, who had previously published a history of Scipio in 1732, to complete his supplement to Plutarch by writing a thorough history of Epameinondas. This was first published in 1739 and coupled with Folard’s observations. This may in fact be considered the first ever attempt to provide an exhaustive account of the Theban’s life, making use of Xenophon in particular, which the previous, more biographical works, did not. It was certainly the definitive account for the century undergoing a number of re-prints, including an English translation in 1787, which, in addition to Folard, also included Saint-Pierre’s comparison with Scipio. This was paired, in two volumes, with Tour’s history of Scipio thus completing the remedy of the lamentable loss of some of Plutarch’s best work.

While the French academics were busy at work in the 1730s a somewhat anomalous work was published in Danish by the Norwegian writer, Baron Ludvig Holberg, who wrote a

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9 Folard (1724), 222-241.
10 Tour (1741), ix-xi.
11 Gédoyn (1745), 53-69.
12 Rollin (1739), 222-310 (English translation).
13 Saint-Pierre (1737), 48-61.
14 Tour (1741), vii-viii (for d’Aguesseau). This was the earliest edition I could access so I am uncertain if Folard’s work was included in the original publication.
15 Tour (1787).
book on various heroic men and women throughout the ages, called *Heroes and Heroines*, including a curious comparison between Socrates and Epameinondas, first published in 1739.\textsuperscript{16} While the reasons for doing so would be questioned by a later scholar,\textsuperscript{17} it is clear that their mutual philosophic interests and the stories of Socrates’ rescue of Alcibiades and Epameinondas’ rescue of Pelopidas were a major source of inspiration.\textsuperscript{18} In spite of the criticism this work was known throughout Europe, being translated into German, Dutch, Swedish and Russian, alongside an abridged English version.\textsuperscript{19}

By the late eighteenth century we find the emergence of German works on Epameinondas, which would dominate the scholarship for well over a hundred years. This properly began with August Gottlieb Meissner’s extensive history of Epameinondas published in two volumes: the first in 1798, the second in 1801. Meanwhile Johann Daniel Tewaag, a Latin teacher and Lutheran preacher from Bochum, published a life of Epameinondas and Pelopidas in 1800. Meissner criticized this work for apparently ignoring Pausanias, Diodorus and Xenophon: clearly egregious omissions.\textsuperscript{20} In spite of Tewaag, Meissner’s work was undoubtedly definitive, being the oldest work on Epameinondas that still generally merits referencing, as shall be seen. However, within a generation, Eduard Bauch, who was unsatisfied with the available modern scholarship, published a moderately sized assessment of Epameinondas’ career in 1834. This work made a number of strides, being rather more critical than had previously been the norm, along with introducing a number of new ideas. Notably, he provided probably the earliest assessment of the source tradition, particularly establishing the importance of Ephorus and Callisthenes.\textsuperscript{21}

By the mid nineteenth century a number of general histories were published, most important of which were the voluminous *A History of Greece* (1846-1856) by George Grote and *History of Greece* (1857-1867) by Ernst Curtius. Both of these works would remain influential well into the twentieth century and are still useful to this day. Meanwhile, in 1863, Ad. du Mesnil published a lengthy article on the value of the politics of Epameinondas. This

\textsuperscript{16}Holberg (1865), 356-413.
\textsuperscript{17}Meissner (1801), 617.
\textsuperscript{18}On these see below, 64-66.
\textsuperscript{19}See Schmidt (2017), 98.
\textsuperscript{20}Tewaag (1800). Cf. Meissner (1801), 619-620.
\textsuperscript{21}Bauch (1834), v-viii (on the source tradition).
was the first systematic attempt to establish the exact nature of Epameinondas’ policies and thereby determine their merit. He noted that previous scholars had showered the general with praise much in the same way as many of the ancient writers. Mesnil therefore provides a more critical evaluation, illuminating much of Epameinondas’ political agenda and highlighting the flawed nature of his policies, though he blames much of this on the overall state of Greece following the events of the fifth century B.C. On the other hand, Mesnil places too much importance on the moral value of the general’s activities and almost entirely omits reference to other modern scholars. However, following this, in 1870, Lebrecht Pomtow published the first exhaustive monograph since Meissner, in which he makes extensive use of Grote and Curtius, along with Bauch and Mesnil. This work certainly satisfied the academic rigour of the period and still remains useful, though Pomtow has a tendency to be excessively laudatory of Epameinondas, even crediting him with achievements that were not his or certainly not his alone. Back over in England, Charles Sankey wrote a general history of the periods of Spartan and Theban supremacy. As with Pomtow, he also generally relies on Grote and Curtius, but his work lacks any innovation.

The first truly modern work on the Theban Hegemony came in Ernst von Stern’s Geschichte Der Spartanischen Und Thebanischen Hegemonie Vom Königsfrieden Bis Zur Schlacht Bei Mantinea, published in 1884. Stern acknowledged the lack of inclusion of relevant modern studies in recent accounts of the period. In stark contrast to this tendency, he provides a helpful bibliography of all the major scholarship on the early fourth century B.C. Greece. This was undoubtedly an important piece of work and would remain the standard on the period until the late twentieth century. In 1890 Adolf Bauer published work on the general’s political and military achievements, significantly establishing his influence upon the likes of Philip and Alexander. By this stage most of the existing scholarship specifically on Epameinodas had become increasingly inadequate. Thus, by 1900, this was, to some extent, remedied with the publication of Heinrich Swoboda’s article on Epameinondas in

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22 Mesnil (1863), 290.
23 Mesnil (1863), 289-342.
24 Pomtow (1870), 33 n. 2 (Bauch), 121 n. 1 (Mesnil).
25 Sankey (1877).
26 Stern (1884), v-x.
27 Bauer (1890), 271-274.
This may be considered the first exhaustive monograph, which utilizes modern scholarship and ideas, particularly acknowledging the over-glorification of the Theban present in the surviving sources (with the exception of Xenophon). It is undoubtedly the most successful dedicated study to date; however, Swoboda’s critique of the tradition preserved primarily by Plutarch and Diodorus borderlines on the extreme: he is unwilling to accept almost any kind of anecdotal material.

During the twentieth century a large number of relevant works have been published; indeed, too many to list. Most important for my purposes are Bersanetti’s work on Pelopidas in 1949 and Cloché’s *Thèbes de Béotie, des origines à la conquête romaine*, published in 1952. In 1958 Fortina published the most recent monograph on Epameinondas. Unfortunately, it offers very little new discussion to the previous work on the general and, as a result, fails to supersede Swoboda’s important article. Since then, scholarship specifically dealing with Epameinondas is relatively scarce, the most important of which is Cawkwell’s study on the politics of the general, which may be considered the culmination of much of the scholarship from the previous 150 years. Following this, Buckler’s landmark 1980 publication, *The Theban Hegemony, 371-362 BC*, provided the definitive account of the period of Theban supremacy, which is still essential for any serious study on the topic. In addition, with a focus more on the Spartan side of things, we may add Cartledge’s work on Agesilaus and Hamilton’s general account of the downfall of Sparta. Since then there have been a number of publications, which have improved our ability to examine the relevant sources: these include Georgiadou’s commentary on Plutarch’s *Pelopidas* and Stylianou’s commentary on Diodorus’ book 15.

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28 Swoboda (1900). 2674-2707.
29 Buck (1994), xviii-xx, provides a useful list of much of this scholarship.
30 Bersanetti (1949), 43-101; Cloché (1952).
31 See Westlake (1960), 159-161.
32 Cawkwell (1972).
33 Buckler (1980a).
34 Cartledge (1987); Hamilton (1991). Also worthy of mention is Hanson (1999), on which, see below, 9-10.
Methodology

Although the career of Epameinondas was a major subject of a number of significant fourth century historical writings not one of these survive. We are therefore reliant primarily on Diodorus and the numerous references from Plutarch. Because of this our information on significant portions of his life is fragmentary: we have only a handful of references to his career before 371 and, even during the 360s, when he was the leading citizen in Thebes, there are substantial periods where his activities are almost entirely obscure to us. This means that any attempt at reconstruction will almost certainly be fraught with difficulties. To make matters worse, the events from the Battle of Leuctra to the Battle of Mantinea abound with chronological issues, which have yet to find consensus amongst modern scholarship. It is therefore imperative to exhibit a certain degree of caution when examining Epameinondas’ involvement in particular events; we must be wary of crediting the general with actions and decisions that may belong to a collective political or military unit. Conversely there is also a danger of presuming he had no involvement simply because the sources do not mention him. Because of these reasons it is useful to reflect on the methodology that will be employed here.

A study that makes an individual, who may be deemed historically significant in the realms of politics and warfare, as its focal point is amongst the most traditional form of historical writing. It is what Nietzsche would call ‘Monumental History’.\(^{36}\) In the nineteenth century German school this would best be achieved by following the Rankean model of empiricism or *quellenkritik*, i.e. critical assessment of primary sources in order to establish ‘essentially’ what happened (“wie es eigentlich gewesen”).\(^{37}\) Such a proposition fits very well with what I am hoping to achieve in this thesis. The Rankean approach of interpreting sources hermeneutically contrasts with the more ‘scientific’ method of positivism or, in the twentieth century, logical positivism. Though these two terms are distinct, they both refer to a way of thinking in which the verifiability of any fact is theoretically achievable through logical reasoning. Both of these schools of thought have their advantages and disadvantages

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\(^{36}\) Nietzsche (1874/1997), 57-123.
\(^{37}\) Ranke (1972), 57. The word eigentlich has often been translated to mean ‘actually’, which had a significant impact upon Anglo-American historiography. It has more recently been argued that something like ‘essentially’ is closer to what Ranke meant.
and one could hope that a reasonable middle ground could be achieved. While this assessment grossly oversimplifies the diversity of historical theory in the nineteenth and early to mid twentieth century,\(^{38}\) it is likely that such thoughts influenced the most recent monographs on Epameinondas: Swoboda’s analysis employs a straightforward Rankean *quellenkritik* and Fortina appears to use a fairly straightforward positivist method.

By the mid twentieth century many historians increasingly began to write history with a sociological approach by examining trends in culture such as economics, religion, race and gender. This shift has been termed the ‘cultural turn’. However, traditional historical practice, and indeed, all of traditional western thought, from around the 1970s onwards, has received serious criticism in the form of postmodernism, postcolonialism, feminism, etc. Postmodernist theory, very simply put, questions the historian’s assumption that the past is knowable: since historical writing generally takes on a narrative form, interpretation of the past is necessarily fictive and thus should be deemed a form of literature rather than a science.\(^{39}\) As a result of these developments narrative history or, more particularly, the history of ‘great men’, has, in recent decades, greatly depreciated in popularity and some scholars would even question the validity of this approach.

Since the onset of such thinking, postmodernism has received some criticism: this is nicely summarized by Chomsky, who accuses postmodernists of lacking any empirical theory that proves their assertions. He also cautions that, if the writing of history does not adhere to some form of logically devised methodology aiming to establish ‘essentially’ what happened, the collective historical understanding of society can, and has often been, used by particular groups for their own political ends, in spite of inaccuracy or gross misinterpretation of the evidence.\(^{40}\) An example of this in Epameinondan scholarship is presented by Hanson, who, in his book, *The Soul of Battle*,\(^ {41}\) represents the Theban general as some kind of champion of democracy by comparing him to the famous American generals, William Tecumseh Sherman.

\(^{38}\) For recent examinations of historical thought see Burrow (2007); Iggers and Wang (2008); Woolf (2011).

\(^{39}\) Major works on postmodernist theory include White (1973); Ankersmit and Kellner (1995); Jenkins and Munslov (2004); Munslov (2012).

\(^{40}\) N. Chomsky has commented on postmodernism a number of times throughout his career: his views are nicely summarized in a post, which he wrote on Z-Magazine's Left On-Line Bulletin Board in 1995, which can now be found at http://www.bactra.org/chomsky-on-postmodernism.html.

\(^{41}\) Hanson (1999).
(1820-1891) and George S. Patton (1885-1945), thus using an historical precedent to laud and justify the actions of important figures in American history and culture. While there is merit to Hanson’s study, its representations can be misleading: for one, the American democratic system is hardly similar to the one that may have existed in Thebes; but, more importantly, as we shall see, we have no reason to think that Epameinondas had any particular devotion to democratic ideals: there is certainly no evidence that he made a habit of establishing democracies himself. Thus, Hanson presents a view of the general that is more reflective of his own political affiliations. Even more recently he published a chapter entitled ‘Epaminondas the Theban and the Doctrine of Preemptive War’. Here Hanson attempts to compare the general’s invasion of Sparta in 370/69 with the American invasion of Iraq in 2003. Once again interesting parallels are made between both ancient and modern conflicts; however, a major problem with his argument arises when he fails to prove that Epameinondas’ attack was actually ‘preemptive’. This interpretation is highly misleading since, on examination of the events leading up to the invasion of Sparta, it was in no way preemptive: in fact, it was in response to Spartan intervention in Arcadia. Boeotia had also recently been invaded by the Spartans (in 371) and had been invaded on a number of occasions throughout the 370s before which Thebes had been occupied by a Spartan garrison. It is clear that the invasion of Sparta in 370/69 was the result of a continuous struggle against the Spartans and should certainly be considered retaliatory rather than preemptive. It is once again apparent that Hanson’s interpretation largely reflects his own political agenda and uses Epameinondas’ actions in order to justify modern American military aggression in the Middle East.

Postmodernist theory argues that we cannot know the past, we can only construct a fictive representation of the materials that remain of the past, much of which are fictive in themselves. However, the problem with this view is that it implies that history should be treated as a literary genre with no major concern for accuracy or objectivity. This theory is therefore counterproductive to improving our understanding of history. While arguments

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42 Burton (2012), 11-14, arguing against Hanson (2010),93-117, asserts that the invasion of Sparta was not preemptive since Epameinondas’ actions were largely opportunistic and improvisational. This is likely correct, but it is probably more useful to view the invasion in its wider political and military contexts. Roisman (2017), 301, also against Hanson, sees the invasion as a means to expand Boeotian influence into Arcadia rather than defend Boeotia.
from both sides continue to advocate for their positions on the matter more recent scholarship has attempted a middle ground by admitting that, perhaps, the practice of history did in fact need to be re-examined. Indeed, the study of ancient history has benefited from a number of different approaches that continue to be utilized and developed worldwide. But, if we do not employ a rigorous standard for accuracy and objectivity, it would not be possible to justify criticism of work that is heavily influenced by an agenda (intentionally or not).

Where does that leave the study of ‘great men’? It seems to me that all reflections on the historical method throughout every era tend to exhibit a great deal of merit but at the same time harbour what, to others, may be deemed as illogical notions. The problem arises when one deals in absolutes, but any fact in science should theoretically be subject to the same degree of scrutiny as any fact of history. And while history writing can certainly not be entirely indistinguishable from literature, it is neither completely distinguishable from scientific practice, which is also limited by a need to explain its concepts in a narrative format. With this in mind it becomes clear how to devise a logical methodology. First it is necessary to identify the limitations of the topic: the ancient and medieval historian, as aptly noted by Carr, must recognize the fact that they know almost nothing about their topics. By comparison with modern history, the information we possess of the events in question is immeasurably sparse. It is therefore the ancient historian’s task to fill in the gaps through a process of abductive reasoning. This is particularly required for a study of Epameinondas on whom our surviving narratives have relatively few things to say and much of what does survive is highly eulogistic. Most of our information comes from writers in the Roman period who, however, had access to contemporary sources. This means that we possess only reinterpretations of interpretations of the events. Bearing this in mind, on the other hand, we can accept that Epameinondas had involvement in a number of significant events such as the battles of Leuctra and Mantinea: it would be quite difficult to argue against these facts. We can then, with perhaps less certainty, accept that many of the historical facts we have reflect what happened without too much distortion. More suspect are the various pieces of anecdotal

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44 Carr (1961), 14.
45 Abductive reasoning, as opposed to inductive, looks only for probable conclusions rather than certain ones, Douglas (2001), 141-169.
46 With the possible exception of Xenophon who is at pains to compliment him for anything.
evidence preserved in various writers, especially in the works of Plutarch. These are generally biographical, reflecting character, usually with little political or military interest. Generally, it is impossible to confirm or deny the historicity of these anecdotes, particularly as they tend to portray an idealized version of the general, but Plutarch at least had access to good sources and may have obtained much of his *apophthegmata* from the likes of Callisthenes and Ephorus. Of course sceptics of this material will remain, but it is probable that much of the information originated in the decades following Epameinondas’ death, which would indicate that what we do have is a reflection of the mid to late fourth century memory of the great Theban, which will undoubtedly bear many elements of truth that we can unfortunately never fully grasp. Because of the unavoidable uncertainty inherent in this study it is preferable to employ a wide scope of interpretation: it is logical, when a number of possibilities exist, to consider all of them. While I will tend to argue in favour of what appears to me to be the most likely option, the fallibility of my preference is manifest. Thus, the nature of our surviving material means that a speculative approach is largely necessary throughout. At times, this conjecture may overstep its bounds, but this is a necessary evil since, as Syme once said, “conjecture cannot be avoided, otherwise the history is not worth writing, for it does not become intelligible”. However, by maintaining a wide scope it is hoped that a comprehensive representation of Epameinondas’ career will present itself.

The study of an individual also naturally has a teleological aspect (his death); therefore, a narrative format is unavoidable. Epameinondas’ impact on succeeding events and his reception throughout history will also be explored to some extent, providing a *telos* that brings us up to today. While it would be possible to take a more thematic approach, as Cartledge did for his monograph on Agesilaus, a number of articles published in the last few decades have already utilized this method in isolation. In fact, what we are really lacking is a coherent narrative on Epameinondas that takes account of the abundant work that has been produced since Fortina’s *Epaminonda*. For instance, many studies now exist that examine Theban (and Boeotian) culture, and there have also been several significant archaeological

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48 E.g. Cawkwell (1972), on Epameinondan politics; Hammond (1997), on his influence on Philip and Alexander of Macedon; Cooper (2000), on his supposed fortification network; or the collection of Essays in Beck and Buckler (2008).
and topographical surveys, along with studies on numismatics and epigraphy. These have greatly enhanced our perspective on the people and the environment in which Epameinondas lived.

In spite of postmodernism, recent technological developments have inspired one scholar to posit that we may in fact be at the beginning of a new golden age in historical practice. This ‘golden age’ is due mainly to the internet, which has greatly improved our ability to access and examine information. An example of this, and particularly important for this work, is the advances in topography: although many of Epameinondas’ military endeavours have received excellent analyses by scholars, the majority of these were published before the last twenty years and lacked the advantages of modern technology: Google Maps allows us to obtain an in depth understanding of the topography of any given area within moments, whereas my predecessors had to actually visit sites in order to fully grasp the terrain. While this method is probably still second best, it provides an unprecedented efficacy in obtaining accurate topographical information. Consequently, while I have endeavoured to provide the relevant scholarship for topography, I have heavily supplemented these studies with my own observations and measurements from Google Maps.

**Thesis Layout**

In order to determine the nature of the source tradition my first chapter is a brief but comprehensive examination of the source material. This considers the purpose and relative biases of our material, whether surviving or non-extant, and thus provides a reasonable basis for interpretation and reconstruction of the relevant events. Chapter two then begins the historical narrative of Epameinondas’ life from his education to his first recorded election as boeotarch in 371. Since our record from this part of his career is almost entirely absent, rather than simply deal with our surviving references to the general, it is apt to consider his role within the context of the history of Thebes and the Boeotian League in order to determine his

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49 E.g. the collection of essays in Gartland (2016) or Schachter (2016a), on Boeotian culture and history; Fossey (1988); Farinetti (2011), on topography and archaeology; Hepworth (1989); Hepworth (1998), on numismatics; Fossey (2014), on epigraphy.

50 Woolf (2011), 11.
activities throughout these events. From 371 to 366 we are on generally firmer ground in spite of a number of chronological difficulties, therefore chapters three to six take on a fairly straightforward narrative; however, throughout, it continues to be necessary to consider major historical events that Epameinondas may or may not have been involved in. He will, by necessity, have adopted a particular political stance in relation to the events, which is worthwhile attempting to establish. Throughout part of 366 and most of 365, practically nothing is known about the Theban’s activities; thus, chapter seven, considers his potential role and his probable attitude to the major events of this period.

By 364, Epameinondas was deeply involved in the Boeotian naval project, which probably stretched back into the previous two years. Our knowledge of this episode is obscure but has been emboldened by a number of epigraphical documents, which scholars now generally agree indicate that the project was a major undertaking. Consequently chapter 9 has, by necessity, adopted a hypothetical methodology in which a large variation of possibilities about the nature of the construction of the fleet and the shipsheds, the route of the expedition and its impact upon the political atmosphere of the Aegean and Propontic Greek city states are investigated. Much of this section relies on a great deal of circumstantial evidence; however, in general, I have allowed for a reasonable degree of error, to account for the inexorably conjectural nature of the chapter. Chapter 10 covers the events leading up to and including the Battle of Mantinea in 362 and Epameinondas’ death. This is the only time in which Xenophon places Epameinondas at the forefront of his narrative. We therefore have a fairly complete record of the campaign and are able to formulate a relatively detailed reconstruction.
Chapter 1

The Historiographical Tradition Part One: Fourth Century

The source tradition pertaining to the life and career of Epameinondas or, more generally, the period of Theban supremacy, is a wide and varied topic; indeed, it would be worthy of its own monograph, far beyond the scope of these chapters. In fact, this was achieved to a certain extent in Shrimpton’s unpublished thesis ‘The Epaminondas Tradition’. While this work developed a number of compelling theories that can still reasonably be used as models for interpreting the surviving material, in light of a number of important and detailed publications, Shrimpton’s thesis is now somewhat insufficient for a comprehensive understanding of the source tradition, though it remains the most detailed historiographical study specifically concerned with Epameinondas and the Theban supremacy. More recently, commentaries on both Plutarch’s Pelopidas and Diodorus’ book 15 have expanded discussion on the topic and are consequently of prime importance for understanding the tradition. On the other hand, scholarship on our most detailed account of the period, in books six and seven of Xenophon’s Hellenica, would certainly merit a reassessment since the most recent commentary on his work was published well over 100 years ago. Thus, the purpose of the following two chapters is to provide an overview of the source tradition based on the various communes opiniones of modern scholarship in order to establish a framework for interpretation. This will allow us to effectively analyze the career of, and events surrounding, Epameinondas. To do this I will go through each relevant ancient author systematically. Part one covers the ancient literature from the fourth century, which formed the basis of the surviving tradition. Our existing sources had access to a variety of ancient authors whose works are no longer extant. These include Ephorus, Callisthenes, Theopompus

51 Shrimpton (1970). Cf. Shrimpton (1971b), 310-318, in which a number of his arguments are also presented, albeit in a condensed form.
52 Georgiadou (1997); Stylianou (1998).
53 Underhill (1900).
and perhaps even Anaximenes and Timaeus. Minor portions of the following ancient historians’ works are preserved in fragments within the work of later writers.\(^{54}\)

**Xenophon**

There is no doubt that Xenophon’s account of the war between Thebes and Sparta is by far the most comprehensive. Plutarch asserts a personal friendship between Xenophon and Agesilaus to the extent that the latter provided tutelage for the former’s children at Sparta (Plut. *Ages*. 20). He also lived in the Peloponnesus during the wars with Thebes. Because of this, he probably had access to a myriad of primary accounts and records. However, as far as an historical source, his account is one-sided at best and very exclusive. His focus is largely on the events in the Peloponnesus with some concern for the Athenians, but largely only accounts for Boeotian activities when it concerns Sparta. Despite this, Xenophon provides us with the only extensive primary account of this era and is therefore integral to a study of any of the events or leading figures during this period. It is then useful to examine the *Hellenica’s* use as a source, its reliability and any other aspects, which may prove significant for a study on Epameinondas and the Theban Hegemony.

Xenophon appears to have been ideally disposed to writing a history of his times considering his experience. He is generally believed to have been born c. 430 to an aristocratic family in a city near Athens. Though his early years are not well documented, he is certain to have had a good education, becoming accustomed to Athenian politics and, it is said that, he was a friend and student of Socrates (Diog. Laert. 2. 6. 48). He may well have fought in the Athenian cavalry, as was usual for the aristocratic class,\(^{55}\) though it is doubtful that he was old enough to have been present at the Battle of Delium in 424 as has been thought.\(^{56}\) In 401 he went off on the great expedition of Cyrus, covered in his *Anabasis*. He

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\(^{54}\) See Jacoby (1923-58) and Brill's New Jacoby (online) for a collection of the extracts. For an overview of their historical value see Pearson (1943), 43-56.

\(^{55}\) Hutchinson (2000), 14. This is certainly probable as it is unlikely that Xenophon would have subsequently gone on a mercenary expedition without previous military experience.

\(^{56}\) Diog. Laert. 2. 5. 22; Strabo 9. 405; Macrob. 21. The story of Socrates’ rescue of Xenophon is generally considered too early and may have originated from confusion with the story of Socrates’ rescue of Alcibiades (Plat. *Symp*. 225), see Underhill (1900), lxxx.
travelled extensively throughout the Persian Empire and was even made one of the generals during the latter half of their epic journey (Xen. *Ana*. 3. 1. 26-47). He may then have served under Agesilaus during his expedition against the Persians in 396 (Diog. Laert. 2. 6. 51) and accordingly followed the Spartan king back to Greece for the Corinthian War, where he perhaps fought against his fellow Athenians at the Battle of Coronea (Xen. *Ana*. 5. 3. 6). Xenophon was then exiled from Athens either for his role in the battle or because of his involvement with Cyrus (Xen. *Ana*. 3. 1. 5). During this time, he lived in Scillus, a Spartan held town south of Olympus (Xen. *Ana*. 5. 3. 7). Then, after the area was liberated from the Spartans, he moved to Corinth (Diog. Laert. 2. 6. 53). When Athens soon allied itself with Sparta in 369 (Xen. *Hell*. 7. 1. 1-14), his exile may have ended. Hutchinson suggests he moved back to Athens after Mantinea in 362, the year he concluded the *Hellenica*. Because he was well-travelled and friendly with the Spartans, particularly Agesilaus, there would have been few in a better position to write a detailed and accurate account of this period of some 50 years.

The *Hellenica* as a whole covers the period between 411 to 362. It begins where Thucydides left off toward the end of the Peloponnesian War and ends after the Battle of Mantinea. It is manifest that a study of the *Hellenica* is essential to understanding this period. This work provides the backbone for determining the chronology of events; although the focus is on Sparta, his work is unparalleled. Because of his eminent position amongst the Spartans, Xenophon was likely to have had first-hand access to information concerning political and military events. Indeed, despite any failings, it can be said that his descriptions of military activity and topographical details seem to infer possible reports of the actual participants of these events.

However, when modern scholars afford such praise of Xenophon’s *Hellenica*, it is usually met with harsh criticism also. Generally speaking, his work is full of partiality towards Sparta and omission of certain events, which may have been deemed embarrassing.

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57 Hutchinson (2000), 15. It must be noted that much of what is stated by historians about Xenophon’s life during this period is based primarily on conjecture, see Cartledge (1987), 61.
58 See Long (1873), 1297-1304; Anderson (1974), for the life of Xenophon.
59 Tritle (1997), 4-5.
60 Buckler (1980a), 263.
or unflattering to the Spartans. Chief among many others is his refusal to name Epameinondas as the general who led the Boeotians at Leuctra and, perhaps even more astounding, is his omission of the founding of Messene and the new Messenian state. Cartledge goes so far as to say that the title *Hellenica* or ‘Greek History’ is a misnomer and that the Penguin Classics version entitled *A History of My Times* serves to indicate Xenophon’s subject matter much more precisely.61 Indeed the *Hellenica* is so closely focused on the events of the Peloponnesus that he appears to have written primarily from first-hand knowledge without any attempt to obtain detailed information about the activities of the Boeotians. Xenophon’s overall portrayal of Epameinondas, which is almost exclusively confined to the campaign leading up to the Battle of Mantinea in 362, is that of an excellent general (Xen. Hell. 7. 5. 4-26). But his refusal to give him credit for any political activity has provided us with a heavily skewed representation of the Theban. This image has unfortunately affected some modern scholars’ interpretation of his political vision (i.e. that the scope of his schemes went no further than the spread of Theban imperialism).62

It seems apparent from such omissions that Xenophon’s intentions for writing this work were not to provide the world with an exhaustive history of the period. The problem of interpreting his work, however, largely stems from the lack of a preface. In the exact section where one would expect the intentions of the author to be laid out, he simply just continues where Thucydides left off. Thus, his work is invariably contrasted to the apparently superior historians of the previous century: Herodotus and Thucydides.63 As Gray notes, this has caused scholars to assume that Xenophon was attempting to write his history in the tradition of Thucydides. However, she also fairly points out how far short the *Hellenica* falls by comparison: lacking that “Thucydidean concern for accuracy and analysis”.64 If then, Xenophon was not literally attempting a continuance of Thucydides’ work, what other options are there? Cartledge dismisses the view that his work is just a simple memoir on the grounds that Xenophon reveals very little about his own part in the events.65 Whereas by

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63 Hamilton (1997), 43-44.
64 Gray (1989), 1-2.
contrast, in his *Anabasis*, Xenophon describes his return from Asia, subsequent exile and settlement in Scillus.

Though an in-depth analysis on the intentions of Xenophon’s *Hellenica* goes beyond the scope of this discussion, a brief look at the philosophical context of his work may prove illuminating. Xenophon greatly admired Spartan virtues, to say the least. His *Agesilaus*, as Gray puts it, “offers the picture of a military leader possessed of all the virtues as a model for imitation.” 66 Other works also exhibit similar didacticism: the *Cyropaedia* attempts to convey the ideal ruler through the partly fictional biography of Cyrus the Great in which Xenophon’s Persia is modelled more on Spartan institutions than the historical Persian ones. 67 In addition, the *Hiero* is a dialogue on the different nature of happiness between a despot and a private citizen, arguing that the life of a tyrant can ultimately be superior. 68 It is then surely reasonable to assume that this moralizing would apply to the *Hellenica*. 69 If this is true, the fact that this work largely focuses on the activities of the Spartans is not surprising. It is apparent that Xenophon viewed the Spartan way of life as admirable and one of the major features of the *Hellenica* was to showcase virtue. Because the Boeotians frequently made the Spartans look bad during this period, it often went against his purpose to include such information.

Xenophon was a well-travelled man who was certainly in a good position to write a work of history. As an experienced general his knowledge and descriptions of battles and military activities are detailed and vivid. However, because of his Spartophilia, the work is also fraught with incredible omissions, indeed, too many to list. Despite this, it appears likely that it was not entirely his intention to write a history comparable to that of Thucydides, rather, he preferred to focus on the Spartans, whom he believed to have great virtue. Indeed, it seems most likely that his purpose was, at least in part, to provide a moralizing model for others to follow, which is consistent with the theme of his various other works.

68 On the *Hiero* see Strauss (2000); Levy (2018), 29-50.
69 On the moral didacticism of the *Hellenica* see Hau (2016), 216-244.
Ephorus

Because it has been generally accepted that Diodorus used Ephorus for much of his narrative, the latter is perhaps the most important of our non-extant sources. There is very little that can be said about his life save that he came from a town in Asia Minor called Cyme and he was possibly a pupil of Isocrates as well as a contemporary (and fellow student) of Theopompus. He died before his work was finished; therefore his son Demophilus took up his father’s pen and completed the final book. He perhaps lived c. 405-330, though this is far from certain. His major work, Diodorus tells us, was a ‘universal history’ covering almost 750 years in 30 books, which included prooemia, up to and including Philip’s conquest of Perinthus in 341/0 (Diod. 16. 76. 5). This was the very first work of its kind according to Polybius (Polyb. 5. 33. 2). Though difficult to determine, Barber has reasonably suggested that Ephorus began writing his history after 360 and continued to write until his death c. 330.

Ephorus generally relied on written text for his source material: this not only included historical works like Herodotus and Thucydides, but he often obtained information from poetry and inscriptions. While this sometimes led to major errors or misinterpretation, it did mean he was perfectly capable of establishing his own explanations for the course of events. As for the arrangement of his work, Diodorus again offers us insight with the statement:

Ephorus, on the other hand, having written his general work [universal history], hit the mark, not only in speech, but in his arrangement; for each of his books are arranged to encompass a single topic (Ephorus FGrH 70 T 11 = Diod. 5. 1. 4).
The meaning of this passage, particularly the phrase κατὰ γένος (according to type), has undergone much debate, where a number of different forms of arrangement could have been used: episodic, thematic, or geographic. For a study of the Theban Hegemony and Epameinondas, within other works, there are several cited references to Ephorus, which bear historical significance. Other than Diodorus and Plutarch these are also found in Polybius and Diogenes where we find useful historical as well as historiographical information. Ephorus apparently covered the subject of Epameinondas within five books, as his arrangement was not honed to cover specific historical figures separately. It has been argued that he portrayed the Theban general in a highly laudatory manner. According to the fourth century A.D. philosopher, Porphyry, Ephorus plagiarized the works of Daimachus, Callisthenes, and Anaximenes. Of these it is often concluded that Ephorus used Callisthenes for much of his fourth century events; however, this has been disputed and he may have in fact relied on his own knowledge and research of the events he lived through.

Callisthenes

An unfortunate loss for the history of both the early fourth century and much of the reign of Alexander the Great is the works of Callisthenes. Originating in Olynthus around c. 360, he was fathered by Diotimos and mothered by Hero, a niece of Aristotle. He apparently received tuition from the latter and was brought up within his house. Aristotle, believing that Callisthenes did not have the right kind of intelligence to be a philosopher, used his influence to get Callisthenes a position in Alexander’s entourage. He was then made the official chronicler of the Persian expedition. Unfortunately, he was accused of

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75 For the methodology and arrangement of Ephorus' work see Barber (1935), 17-48; Stylianou (1998), 84-104; Pownall (2004); Parmeggiani (2011); Parker BNJ 70. On κατὰ γένος specifically, see Drews (1963), 244-255; Drews (1976), 497-498.
76 For English translations of the fragments of Ephorus see Barber (1935), 1993 ed., 244-251. fr. 48-54; Parker BNJ 70.
79 Ephorus FGrH 70 T17 = Euseb. Praep. Evan. 10. 3. Parker BNJ 70 T 17, argues that Daimachus was probably writing several decades after Ephorus’ death; however, see below, 31.
81 Parker (2004), 40-45.
82 Hazel (2000), 50. The date of his birth is uncertain.
83 For doubt about this recommendation see Bosworth (1970), 407-413.
being involved in a conspiracy and was subsequently executed in a most horrific manner. It is likely that he was falsely implicated because of his refusal to perform *proskynesis* for Alexander. Though his final act displayed a great deal of courage against a tyrant, his legacy amidst the surviving ancient literature was tarnished by his excessive flattery of Alexander within his work. He died around about 328.\textsuperscript{84}

Before Callisthenes went on the expedition to write his *Deeds of Alexander*, he had already written some considerable work. He wrote an account of the Phocian War and a *Hellenica* in 10 books that covered the years from the Peace of Antalcidas in 387 and finishing at Philip’s assumption of the throne of Macedonia in 359 (Diod. 14. 117. 8). This work undoubtedly covered the Theban Hegemony and is likely to have been a major source for later writers. Indeed, as noted above, he is said to have been used by Ephorus and was certainly a major source for Plutarch’s work on Epameinondas and Pelopidas. That he wrote on Theban affairs is evident from some remaining fragments of his account.\textsuperscript{85} Examples include a reference to Epameinondas in a fragment relating the founding of both Megalopolis and Messene (Polyb. 40. 33), and also a fragment about Pelopidas at Tegyra (Plut. *Pel.* 17.). Callisthenes’ biases tend to be somewhat hostile to Sparta and partial towards Thebes. It has therefore been suggested that he used the Boeotian historians Dionysodorus and Anaxis.\textsuperscript{86} However, the arguments for this are entirely conjectural.\textsuperscript{87}

*Theopompus*

Possibly an exact contemporary of Ephorus, the historian Theopompus also wrote a large and comprehensive history focused on the events of the fourth century.\textsuperscript{88} Photius, in chapter 176 of his work, tells some details about the arrangement of Theopompus’ work and

\textsuperscript{84} *Suda* s. v. Καλλισθένης; Plut. *Alex.* 52-55; Diog. Laert. 5. 1; Arr. *Anab.* 4. 10-14; Curt. 8. 5-8. For an account of his life and works see Kroll (1919), 1674-1726; Brown (1949), 225-248; Pearson (1960), 22-49; Rzepka *BNJ* 124. See also Bosworth (1988), 296.

\textsuperscript{85} E.g. Callisthenes *FGrH* 124, F 18, F 23, F 26, on which, see Rzepka *BNJ* 124. See also Brown (1949), 231.

\textsuperscript{86} Carrata-Thomes (1952), 11 n. 25. See below, 32-33.

\textsuperscript{87} Westlake (1939), 19-21; Shrimpton (1971b), 317 n. 39.

\textsuperscript{88} For thorough treatment of Theopompus’ life and works see Shrimpton (1991); Flower (1994); Vattuone (2014), 7-37; Morison *BNJ* 115.
his life. However, part of Photius’ brief account of Theopompus’ life does not appear to have come directly from his work (Phot. Biblio. 176). Thus, we are unable to establish the accuracy of many of his biographical details. According to this other source, he was born in Cyme to one Damasistratus. He and his father were exiled from their home for alleged Laconism, possibly in 394 after the defeat of the Spartan navy near Cnidus. Theopompus was pardoned sometime later by Alexander the Great during the latter’s reign. Once the young king had died, Theopompus was clearly unwanted by most people: he fled to Egypt seeking refuge at Alexandria, one of the intellectual centres of the world. However, Ptolemy, thinking Theopompus a busybody, tried to have him executed. Theopompus fortunately managed to avoid this with help from some friends. As noted above, he was apparently a student of Isocrates. We are uncertain about the date of his birth, but it has been estimated that he was born sometime between 405 and 376. According to Photius, Theopompus travelled throughout the Greek-speaking world giving displays of his oratorical virtuosity. The date of his death is unknown.

The historical writing of Theopompus consists of an epitome of Herodotus, a history in 12 books covering the years 410-394 known as the *Hellenica* and a history of the accession and reign of Philip of Macedon (360/59-336) known as the *Philippica*, which was a massive work of 58 books. Thus he did not see fit to cover the period that included the Corinthian War and the Theban Hegemony. His reasons for skipping this period of history (394-360) are conjectured by Bruce. The historical value of his work then, for a study of Epameinondas, does not appear to be that great. However, if Photius is correct, a mere 16 books of the 58 actually covered Philip’s career (Phot. Cod. 176). The rest of his narrative was filled with digressions, which entailed a large variety of information, including many historical details. It is significant that, out of the small portion of surviving fragments, there are references to

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89 For biographical information about Theopompus, most of what is known comes from the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, Photius (c. 810-893 A.D), who wrote a series of abridgments and extracts of classical authors, often called the *Bibliotheca*. On these see Morison *BNJ* 115.

90 Flower (1994), 13. suggests some kind of reference work.


92 Both the *Suda* s. v. Θεόπομπος and Phot. *Biblio* 176, offer significantly different dates. See Shrimpton (1991), 3-5; Flower (1994), 14-16, 31; Morison *BNJ* 115 T 1.

93 See Shrimpton (1991), 196-274; Morison *BNJ* 115, for English translations of Theopompus’ fragments.

94 Bruce (1970), 92-93; see also Fritz (1941), 767.
Epameinondas and the Theban Hegemony. Indeed, Plutarch refers to Theopompus twice during his account of the first Theban invasion of the Peloponnesus in 370/69 (Plut. Ages. 31. 3; 32. 8-33. 1).

It is uncertain to what extent later writers used Theopompus’ work as a major source for accounts relating to the Theban Hegemony, but his work will have certainly been read by many of them, especially Plutarch. Either way, it is significant that he was a contemporary and possibly fellow student of Ephorus, whose work and life was affected by the rapidly changing political situations of fourth century Greece. As well as historical, Theopompus also had political, geographical and mythical interests. Theopompus apparently shared the view (with Xenophon, Antisthenes, Plato, and Isocrates) that the entire Greek world would be better off with some form of hegemonic ‘one-man rule’; his work certainly featured many strongly moralistic sentiments. However, from the surviving fragments it is apparent that his views on Epameinondas tended to be rather derogatory and were not dissimilar to Xenophon’s.

Timaeus

Although Timaeus is not referred to by any of the extant material there is a slight possibility that he wrote about the Theban Hegemony. We are informed that Timaeus’ history ended during the 129th Olympiad (264/3), which is when Polybius’ history began (Polyb. 1. 5. 1): Timaeus probably died not long after this. For his birth, Pseudo-Lucian tells us that he lived to the age of 96 ([Luc.] Macrobr. 22), which at least indicates that he lived a very long life. Therefore, an estimation of his birth some time around 350, perhaps earlier, seems appropriate. We know that he was exiled from his hometown of Tauromenium in Sicily (Diod. 21. 17. 1), a city, which may have been founded by his father, Andromachus (Diod.

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95 There are four references to Epameinondas within the fragments (Theopompus FGrH 115 F 308, F 274, F 322-3, F 344) and at least six other relevant references.
97 For a survey of his use of all these topics see Bruce (1970), 86-109.
98 Fritz (1941), 765-787.
16. 7. 1). Timaeus, a pupil of Isocrates (Suda s. v. Τίμαους). Probably toward the end of this period, Timaeus wrote his major work while still in Athens (Plut. De Exil. 14).

Timaeus’ wrote a history of Sicily, Italy and Magna Graecia in 40 books. This work has received much praise but mostly blame from later writers because of his tendency to attack all other historians. This is particularly shown by Polybius who devotes much of his work to the discussion of Timaeus. Within his Histories, Timaeus payed a lot of attention to chronology: Polybius tells us that, for each year, Timaeus cited the ephors and kings of Sparta, the archons at Athens and the victors at the Olympic games (Polyb. 12. 11). Although there is no direct evidence that Timaeus wrote about the Theban Hegemony, his large history, which covered contemporary events, surely could not have gone without reference to the most major events that occurred on mainland Greece. While Timaeus probably did not deal with the Theban Hegemony directly, his accounts of the tyrants Dionysius I and Dionysius II of Sicily and their respective support of the Spartans during this period would still have been a useful addition to any ancient historian writing on the topic. He may have, as a result, been used by Diodorus for his information on Sicily and Italy.

Anaximenes

Another interesting addition to fourth century historiography is the orator and historian, Anaximenes of Lampsacus. Clues for the dates of his birth and death do not appear to have been attested by the ancient sources, thus we must rely on the estimation of scholars. It is generally asserted that Anaximenes was born around 380 and died about 320. The

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101 Though a different story concerning the founding of this city is earlier testified by Diodorus (Diod. 14. 59. 2).
102 For the life and works of Timaeus see Brown (1958); Vattuone (2002); Baron (2013); Hau (2016), 129-136; Champion BN/ 566.
103 See Walbank (1962), 1-12, for an overview of ancient opinion on Timaeus.
104 Baron (2013), 29-30, notes the probably wide scope of Timaeus’ history.
105 See below, 36.
106 Sherman (1952), 200. n. 3; Russel (2003), 84; Rourke (2005), 19. This is probably a generalized estimation based on the fact that he was likely to have outlived Alexander the Great but, by the time of his
*Suda* tells us that he was born in Lampsacus and was a pupil of Diogenes the Cynic and Zoilus of Amphipolis, the grammarian. We also learn that he was a teacher of Alexander the Great and accompanied him on his campaign (*Suda s. v. Ἀναξιμένης*). Like Herodotus, Anaximenes gained fame by reading his work at the Olympic games (Luc. *Herod*. 3; Paus. 6. 18. 2). Both Pausanias and the *Suda* preserve a story in which Anaximenes saved his hometown from destruction. As the story goes, Alexander wanted to destroy Lampsacus for its alleged support of the Persians, thus the Lampsacenes sent Anaximenes to reason with him. On hearing of this, Alexander vowed that he would do exactly the opposite of what Anaximenes would plead. However, when the rhetorician arrived, he asked Alexander to destroy Lampsacus and enslave the women and children. Because of the oath he swore, Alexander was forced to do the opposite of this (Paus. 6. 18. 2-4). It is also said he was a great rival of Theopompus: according to Pausanias and the *Suda*, Anaximenes wrote a defamatory treatise on Sparta and Athens, which he put Theopompus’ name on before subsequently having it published throughout the Greek world (Paus. 6. 18. 5). Other miscellaneous information is offered to us: he was said to be fat (Diog. Laert. 6. 57) and dressed badly (Athen. 1. 38).

For the most part, it seems that Anaximenes was a renowned rhetorician. He may have written an *Encomium on Helen* (Isoc. 10. 14), which, though originally attributed to Gorgias, Jebb believes was written by Anaximenes. Via Athenaeus, Diodorus Periegetes tells us that he also wrote a speech prosecuting Phryne, who was a famous courtesan from the period, which implies that he also worked as a logographer. Most famously a *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum*, attributed traditionally to Aristotle is now generally agreed to have been

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107 Flower (1994), 21-22. esp. n. 37, believes that the story of Anaximenes’ rescue of Lampsacus is doubtful, but see Williams *BNJ* 72 T 6; however, the plausibility of a rivalry with Theopompus is a possibility considering they were both under the patronage of Philip.

108 For the life of Anaximenes see Rourke (2005), 19; Williams *BNJ* 72.

109 Jebb (1893), 96-99. His dating of the encomium to 370 B.C. would require Anaximenes to have been at least 10 years older than is generally thought.

110 Diodorus Periegetes *FGrH* 372 F36 = Athen. 13. 60.
written by Anaximenes.\textsuperscript{111} Unfortunately, the modern scholarship on Anaximenes has been overwhelmingly focused on his rhetorical work, particularly as it appears that some of his work has actually survived. Thus, there has been little or no attention to his historical works, though this is mainly due to the lack of relevant fragments. Pausanias tells us that he wrote a history of Philip and then subsequently a history of Alexander (Paus. 6. 18. 2). Probably before his affiliation with Philip, Anaximenes also wrote what seemed to have been a universal history entitled, according to Diodorus, as τὴν πρώτην τῶν Ἑλληνικῶν, which is translated by Sherman as “The First Inquiry of Greek Affairs”\textsuperscript{112} This work apparently covered the events from the creation of the universe down to the death of Epameinondas at Mantinea in 362 (Diod. 15. 89. 3). The significance of Diodorus’ testimonial, which is mentioned alongside the work of Xenophon, should not be underestimated. Though it is doubtful that Diodorus himself made use of Anaximenes’ Hellenica, Anaximenes may have been used by Ephorus; but, perhaps only in part, since a 12 book universal history was not liable to expound much depth upon each topic.\textsuperscript{113}

\textit{Duris}

Another historian worthy of mention, though somewhat later, is Duris of Samos.\textsuperscript{114} According to Plutarch he claimed to have been a descendant of Alcibiades (Plut. \textit{Alc.} 32. 2). He supposedly became a tyrant of Samos and was brother of Lynceus of Samos, the writer of comedies and both of them were pupils of Theophrastus (\textit{Suda s. v. Λυγκεύς}; Athen. 4. 1).\textsuperscript{115} Pausanias also tells us that his son, Skaios (who may, according to Barron, have in fact been his father, named Kaios),\textsuperscript{116} became a boy-boxing champion at Olympia, which occurred

\textsuperscript{111} Rourke (2005), 19-23, provides an overview of the evidence in favour of this assertion; see also Wendland (1904), 499-542.
\textsuperscript{112} Sherman (1952), 201.
\textsuperscript{113} As Shrimpton (1971b), 316 n. 28, points out: we have no conclusive reason to presume that Anaximenes wrote unusually long books.
\textsuperscript{114} See Kebric (1977); Landucci Gattinoni (1997); Hau (2016), 136-141; Pownall \textit{BNJ} 76, for his life and works.
\textsuperscript{115} Dalby (1991), 539-541, has shown the possible fallibility of this claim, though, if Duris’ brother was taught by Theophrastus, there is every chance that Duris was also.
\textsuperscript{116} Barron (1962), 189-192, demonstrates that the name Σκαῖος has actually been corrupted from Κᾰῖος, and was not in fact Duris’ son, but his father. He also shows that Duris may have had another brother named Lysagoras, who could have been a politician.
when they were in exile from Samos (Paus. 6. 13. 5).\(^{117}\) If Barron’s assertions about this so-called ‘Kaios’ can be trusted then we can perhaps give more credence to his approximated birthdate of 360-350.\(^{118}\) Accepting this view, Kebric argues then, that both Kaios and his sons were born during this exile in Sicily. Duris himself may have been born around 330.\(^{119}\) As a pupil of Theophrastus, he appears to have completed his education in Athens, which may have begun around 304/2.\(^{120}\) The family also seems to have had some sort of friendly relationship with the Antigonids (Athen. 4. 1). It is certainly more than clear that he lived till after the death of Lysimachus in 281, as this was when he finished his histories (Plin. *Nat. Hist.* 8. 143).

Duris wrote several works on various topics: most significantly he wrote a history of Greece and Macedonia in perhaps more than 24 books.\(^{121}\) Diodorus says that Duris’ history began at the death of Amyntas III of Macedon, a year or two following the Battle of Leuctra in 370/69 (Diod. 15. 60. 3-6) and ended, as mentioned before, at the death of Lysimachus in 281. It is implied from this text that, since Ephorus could not have read Duris, Diodorus or another of his sources,\(^{122}\) had access to Duris’ work. However, Duris’ account of events from the years 370 to 362 must have only been covered in the first book since Athenaeus informs us that he had already reached the beginning of the Sacred War (357/6) by the second book. Though it is clear that Duris’ focus was primarily on the history of Macedonia, in his first book he could not have avoided mentioning events on mainland Greece and his work was certainly significant for the wider context of the period.

*The Athenian Orators*

The surviving Athenian political speeches provide a great deal of historical information important to the period. Reference to Boeotian activity is unfortunately sparse

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\(^{117}\) Probably referring to the Athenian occupation of 365-322, see Levi (1971), 321.

\(^{118}\) Barron (1962), 191.

\(^{119}\) Kebric (1975), 89; Kedric (1977), 3-4.

\(^{120}\) Kebric (1974), 287.

\(^{121}\) Kebric (1977), 41.

\(^{122}\) Possibly the Chronographic source, see below, 36.
but, as Buckler notes, much is reflected of the attitudes that these pretentious intellectuals held towards the Thebans throughout the fourth century.\textsuperscript{123}

The most contemporary orator to the events in question is Isocrates whose life spanned some 98 years: he was born five years before the Peloponnesian War and died shortly after the Battle of Chaeronea (436-338).\textsuperscript{124} He was thus in an excellent position to comment on the activities of the Boeotians. His most important works for the topic are the \textit{Plataicus} and the \textit{Archidamus}. The \textit{Plataicus} depicts a Plataean ambassador, sometime around 373-371, beseeching the Athenian assembly to help restore his city to its people after it had been destroyed by the Thebans in 373. Whether or not the speech was actually used for its purpose is not certain;\textsuperscript{125} however, it overtly reflects Isocrates’ wholly negative attitude towards Thebes’ aggressive foreign policy. It also bears a number of useful historical references.\textsuperscript{126} The \textit{Archidamus} is a speech placed in the mouth of the then Spartan prince and son of Agesilaus, conveying a plea to the Spartan assembly to do what is necessary to regain control of Messenia. Set probably around 366, it was likely to have been composed as a rhetorical exercise.\textsuperscript{127} The speech provides us with insight into the Athenian and Spartan attitudes to the political situation in Greece. Particularly pertinent is the information provided on the peace of 366/5.\textsuperscript{128} From his work it is apparent that Isocrates predominantly abhorred Thebes during the period of Theban supremacy, particularly since his polis was at war with them for much of it.

\begin{thebibliography}{1}
\bibitem{123} Buckler (1980a), 275-276.
\bibitem{124} For an in depth account of the life and work of Isocrates see Jebb (1893), 1-259. Also see Norlin (1928), ix-li.
\bibitem{125} Hook (1945), 134-135.
\bibitem{126} He refers to the peace between Athens and Sparta in 374 (Isoc. 14. 4, 10, 37); the destruction of Plataea (Isoc. 14. 7, 26); the reason for its destruction (Isoc. 14. 8); the Spartan garrisons in Plataea and Thespiae under Sphodrias in 378 (Isoc. 14. 13-14). Also, significant elsewhere, in his speech to Philip of Macedon in 346, he twice summarizes the history of the Theban Hegemony (Isoc. 5. 43-49, 53-55), see Norlin (1928), 244-245.
\bibitem{127} Norlin (1928), 342-345. See Jebb (1893), 194, for the argument that it was actually composed during this year. Historical details include: the Theban dismantling of the poleis of Thespiae and Plataea; the peace terms of Pelopidas (Isoc. 6. 26-28); examples of victories against the Thebans by the Spartans (Isoc. 6. 47); references to the internal squabbles of the Theban allies (Isoc. 6. 61); the allies of the Spartans (Isoc. 6. 62); the current state of cities within the Peloponnesus (Isoc. 6. 63-70).
\bibitem{128} See below, 222.
\end{thebibliography}
Other than Isocrates, only a few significant references are made by other orators. The most famous of these was Demosthenes who was born around 385/4 or 384/3\(^{129}\) and died in 322 after the failure of the Lamian War.\(^{130}\) On a number of occasions he makes relevant references: in the *Megalopolitans* (written in 353), he mentions the Battle of Mantinea (Dem. 16. 6) and elsewhere he refers to the Battle of Leuctra and the contemporary state of the Peloponnesus (Dem. 18. 18). He also, on at least two other occasions, refers to the Theban Hegemony (Dem. 9. 23; 18. 202). Aeschines, an Athenian born of a relatively humble family, lived from around 390-314\(^{131}\) made the earliest non-historical reference to Epameinondas in his *On the Embassy*, written around 343 (Aeschin. 2. 105). This oration reflects the fear that the Athenians felt about Thebes’ bid for sea power in 364.\(^{132}\) Dinarchus, born in Corinth, lived c. 361/0-291, having moved to Athens probably sometime before 338.\(^{133}\) Within his speech, *Against Demosthenes* (c. 324), he mentions Epameinondas and Pelopidas with a certain degree of praise, briefly summarizing their achievements as leaders of the Theban Hegemony (Din. 1. 72-73). For Dinarchus, the greatness of Thebes was achieved by its generals. This view provides a stark contrast with Isocrates’ earlier perspective.

Overall the Athenian orators appear to have exhibited a fairly negative view of Epameinondas and the power of Thebes, particularly believing that the Thebans overextended themselves; however, following the Athenian-Theban war against Macedon and the subsequent destruction of Thebes, a more positive perspective seems to have been adopted.\(^{134}\)

\(^{129}\) See MacDowell (1990), 370-371.

\(^{130}\) For his life and works see Usher (1993), 1-31.

\(^{131}\) For an assessment of the life and works of Aeschines see Richardson (1889), 1-32; Adams (1919), vii-xxiii, and, more recently, Carey (2000), 1-17.

\(^{132}\) See below, 228-229.

\(^{133}\) For a good overview and assessment of the life and works of Dinarchus see Worthington (1992), 1-79.

\(^{134}\) On this see Momigliano (1935), 113-114; Shrimpton (1970), 1-15; Shrimpton (1971b), 310-315.
Others

There are a few other fourth century historians whose significance as contributors to the source tradition is difficult to attest; however, it is possible that each covered at least a portion of the Theban Hegemony.

Daimachus, of whom only eight fragments and one testimonium are extant, is another said to have been plagiarized by Ephorus. The evidence here certainly informs us that Daimachus wrote a history, but seeing as Ephorus’ work covers the 700 years down to 340 there is no way of knowing what periods were covered. However, the fact that Daimachus is placed beside Callisthenes and Anaximenes, both of whom covered the Theban Hegemony, it is certainly not impossible. On the other hand, the passages associated with a potential Hellenica provide mostly mythological information; thus we cannot be certain about which events were covered.

Another elusive man from the period was Zoilus of Amphipolis, who, as we have seen, may have been a teacher of Anaximenes, probably living between the years 400 to 320. He is referred to as a Cynic and a Grammarian by trade; however, he was most famous for his criticisms of Homer for which he appeared to have been scorned by all. Significantly, the Suda tells us that Zoilus wrote a universal history from the beginning of time to the death of Philip of Macedon (Ἰστορίαν ἀπὸ θεογονίας ἐως τῆς Φιλίππου τελευτής βιβλία). Unfortunately, not a single fragment from this work has survived and we know nothing more about it other than what is in the Suda. However, if indeed he was a teacher of Anaximenes, who wrote a work of a similar scope, he may well have had a measure of

135 Daimachus FGrH 65 T 1 = Euseb. Praep. Evan. 10. 3. Parker BNJ 70 T 17, argues for the older view that FGrH 65 and FGrH 716 (both called Daimachus) refer to the same person, which would mean his history was written several decades after Ephorus’. However, other scholars lean in favour of two authors including a fourth century writer of a Hellenica, in which case it would be believable that Ephorus made use of such a Daimachus. See Engels BNJ 65 T 1a, 1b; Rzepka BNJ 124 T 33.
136 As has been inferred from Daimachus FGrH 65 F 1, 2. See Engels BNJ 65 F 1, 2.
137 Jacoby (1924), 13-18, pegs Daimachos as a possible candidate for the Oxyrhynchus historian, though this has been generally rejected, see Bruce (1967), 25. n. 5; Shrimpton (1970), 316. Trevett (1990), 416-417, points out a possible indication that he wrote about the Siege of Plataea.
139 Vitruv. 7. praef. 8; Suda s. v. Ζωῖλος. See Apfel (1938), 7-9, for a discussion of Zoilus’ criticisms of the works of Homer.
influence on his pupil. Therefore, it is even possible that Anaximenes used his teacher’s work as a source for his own history. Of course, this is all highly speculative, but it is surely significant, if true, that Anaximenes’ teacher also wrote a universal history.\textsuperscript{140}

Finally, there were two historians from Boeotia, Anaxis and Dionysodorus, both of whom appear to have each written a *Hellenica*. The only testimonial to both of these historians is given by Diodorus who states: “The works of the Boeotians, Dionysodorus and Anaxis, in order, brought their histories of Greek affairs to an end during this year”.\textsuperscript{141} The year Diodorus is referring to is 361/0, not long after the Battle of Mantinea. However, nothing more is known of these historians and we have no indication of the scope or depth of their work, or even when they were writing. The suggestion that the likes of Callisthenes may have used their work as a source for his account of the Theban Hegemony cannot be proven since Callisthenes may well have written his account before them.\textsuperscript{142} Certainly one must avoid assumptions when there is no evidence to go on, but there are certainly speculative possibilities.

Firstly, the significance of Diodorus’ statement is unclear, but on the surface, it seems to indicate that he may well have read both of these authors. However, just as with both Duris and Anaximenes, who are cited in Diodorus’ book 15, if it is improbable that Diodorus would have read so widely for his work, it becomes more likely that these writers were cited by his source(s). It is therefore possible that they were used by Ephorus.\textsuperscript{143} But, considering their obscurity, the possibility that they were instead used by Ephorus’ source also remains open. This may indeed lead us to suggest that Callisthenes, whom Ephorus may have made use of, is responsible for the reference to Anaxis and Dionysodorus. If this is an apt conclusion, then these Boeotian historians may have been writing in the decade or two following Epameinodas’ death. On the other hand, our only conclusive *terminus ante quem* is in Diodorus’ own time. It is also possible that Diodorus obtained the references from his so-called ‘chronographic source’. This would then imply no influence on his narrative beyond

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{140} On Zoilus see William *BNJ* 71.
\item \textsuperscript{141} Diod. 15. 95. 4: τῶν δὲ συγγραφέων Διονυσόδωρος καὶ Ἀναξις οἱ Βοιωτοὶ τὴν τῶν Ἑλληνικῶν ἱστορίαν εἰς τότε τὸν ἐνιαυτὸν κατεστρώψασι τὰς συντάξεις.
\item \textsuperscript{142} See above, 22.
\item \textsuperscript{143} Cf. Stylianou (1998), 106.
\end{itemize}
some of the casual facts he found in this source. However, Engels has suggested that since, after the rise of Macedon, the standard focus of historians changed from Greek affairs (the *Hellenica*) to Macedonian (the *Philippica*, *Alexandru praxeis* and *Macedonica*). This suggests that the Boetians historians were writing in the 350s or 340s, before the eclipse of Macedonian power in mainland Greece. In the end no decisive conclusion can be made regarding these wholly unknown works.\textsuperscript{144}

\textsuperscript{144} Engels *BNj* 68 T 1. See also Stronk *BNj* 67 T 1.
Chapter 2
The Historiographical Tradition Part Two: Secondary Sources

In spite of the reasonable abundance of relevant histories from the fourth century, of these, only Xenophon survives and, as has been established, the *Hellenica* is wholly insufficient for even a cursory understanding of the period of Theban supremacy, let alone the career of Epameinondas. Fortunately, many of these works were available to both Greek and Roman writers for many centuries; some were apparently still in existence by as late as the tenth century A.D. Most important of these are Diodorus, Plutarch, Nepos and Pausanias. As such, these writers have been presented in order of importance for this study, rather than chronologically, where Diodorus and Plutarch indisputably come first, while Nepos, Pausanias and others are comparatively minor.

*Diodorus*

Where Xenophon fails, it is necessary to consult the *Bibliotheca Historica* by Diodorus of Sicily. Modern scholarship has traditionally been scathing of this work due to its copious topographical, chronological and factual errors; however, recent decades have seen a significant rise in advocates of the work’s originality and merit (particularly for the context in which it was written). This polarization in the scholarship has also led to disagreement over the extent to which Diodorus simply copied or paraphrased his sources, or whether he included his own themes and methodology for writing his history. In spite of this, if the *Bibliotheca* had not survived, we would know next to nothing about Epameinondas within the context of the period that he lived.

Details of Diodorus’ life are mentioned only within his own work. He tells us that he came from Agyrium in Sicily (Diod. 1. 4. 4), though this is not necessarily the city of his

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145 Scholarship on the nature of Diodorus’ work is vast. See Hau et al. (2018), 3-9, for an overview of the various perspectives throughout modern historiography.
birth. It has been asserted that he was born c. 90. There is very little evidence to establish the dates in which his work was written and published, but the general indication has led some scholarship to assume that he began writing it around 60 (since this is when it finished) and would have published it in its entirety by as late as 30 or even the early 20s. However, Stylianou noted that Diodorus originally intended to bring his work down to the year 46/5, which would make this a *terminus post quem* for the date the work was begun. Diodorus claims to have travelled widely throughout the most important regions of Europe and Asia (Diod. 1. 4. 1), though specifically he only states that he visited Egypt (Diod. 1. 44. 1), which can be dated to around 55 B.C. He also claimed to have gone to Rome at some other point (Diod. 1. 4. 2). As far as can be calculated, his visit to Rome had to have been before 45 B.C. Oldfather argues that within his work, it is only evident that he travelled to Egypt (Diod. 1. 22. 2) and that he never went to Mesopotamia as he confuses some of the geography. Diodorus also claims that he learnt Latin from the Romans in Sicily (Diod. 1. 4. 4), a claim that has been contested, though it seems likely that he knew enough for his purposes. He may have died around the late 30s or early 20s B.C.

Diodorus’ history apparently covered the mythical period down to the year of Julius Caesar’s first consulship in 59 (Diod. 1. 4. 6-7). Of the 40 books on which he wrote, only books one to five and 11 to 20 survive, though fragments of the other texts are extant in other authors. The scope of his work, indeed, was so immense that he claims to have worked on it for 30 years (Diod. 1. 4. 1) and, as we have seen, he probably did much of his research in

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146 See below, 37 n. 165.
147 Spoerri (1991), 317; Chamoux et al. (1993), viii esp. n. 3.
148 Oldfather (1933), vii-xi; Sacks (1990), 161-162; Sulimani (2011), 2, 30-37, all suggest around 30 or slightly later. But now see Westall (2018), 91-127, who argues that the work was in fact written in the 50s in praise of Pompey, rather than Caesar.
150 Green (2006), 4-5.
151 Oldfather (1933), xiii. Diodorus describes a shrine of Isis, which is "pointed out to this day". Oldfather’s arguments do not appear to fully prove that Diodorus exaggerated how far he travelled, but it is certainly possible that most of his information could have been obtained from literary sources, especially in Egypt and Rome.
152 Oldfather (1933), xiii-xiv, cites several scholars who attest this.
153 Green (2006), 6-7, suggests that Diodorus died around 35-31, before he had finished editing his work.
154 Diodorus lays out the entire scope of his work in this section.
155 Oldfather (1933), xiv.
Egypt and Rome.\textsuperscript{156} For the period covered in which Diodorus was able to provide a year-by-
year dating system, his work becomes annalistic. His method of doing this is to provide the
archon of Athens, who was voted in about the middle of July and the consulships of Rome,
which commenced on the first of January. Though this presentation has caused much
confusion, Diodorus himself admits this shortcoming (Diod. 20. 43. 7). While he cites many
ancient historians, it is generally thought that his principal source for fourth century Greece
was Ephorus.\textsuperscript{157} His purpose for writing these works appears to have been moralistic: for
people to take heed of both the error and successes of the past (Diod. 1. 1. 3-5).\textsuperscript{158} Overall,
Diodorus’ work serves as a useful counterpoint to other sources and also provides heavily
excerpted portions of non-extant historians.

The Theban Hegemony and the war with Sparta is covered in book 15: most of his
information is likely to have come from Ephorus, though with some possible supplementation
from Timaeus for the narrative of events in the Western Greek world.\textsuperscript{159} In addition to a
historical narrative, Diodorus is also thought to have made use of a ‘chronographic source’,
which not only provided his dates, but also seems to have named authors of relevant works
and provided pieces of general historical information.\textsuperscript{160} By comparison to Xenophon who
looks primarily at the Peloponnesus, Diodorus’ narrative covers events throughout all of
mainland Greece as far north as Macedonia. With some minor instances of bias against
Sparta, he tends to be relatively neutral towards the Spartans, Thebans and Athenians alike,
always willing to praise anyone for virtuous attributes and deeds. This praise, in particular,
has been well afforded to Epameinondas and Pelopidas, which; however, has in some cases
had the effect of distorting aspects of the narrative. Despite this, a great deal of his
information is unique and essential for understanding events beyond the perspective of the
Spartans. Though Diodorus’ work remains an unsatisfactory companion to Xenophon, he

\textsuperscript{156} Stylianou (1998), 21, thinks that, in reality, it would have taken only “a very few years” to complete but
\textsuperscript{157} Green (2006), 14-16; Parker \textit{BNJ} 70
\textsuperscript{158} On the moral didacticism in Diodorus see Hau (2016), 73-123.
\textsuperscript{159} Drews (1962), 384. As is generally agreed upon by historians, see Barber (1935), viii n. 1, for earlier
discussions. See Stylianou (1998), 49-84, who argues against the use of Timaeus.
\textsuperscript{160} On the chronographic source see Stylianou (1998), 25-49; Parker \textit{BNJ} 70 T 9a, T 10, F 214.
certainly fills in many of the gaps left by the latter, at the very least demonstrating the extent of them.\textsuperscript{161}

\textit{Plutarch}

Plutarch wrote at least three biographies that were directly related to this period and topic. These include his \textit{Agesilau\textsc{s}}, \textit{Pelopidas}, and \textit{Epameinondas}. Chief among these for my purposes would have been the latter one, which unfortunately does not survive. Despite this, the remaining two are still invaluable sources, particularly the \textit{Pelopidas} (along with the \textit{Comparison of Pelopidas and Marcellus}), which for a study of Epameinondas offers significant information about his activities before and during the Theban Hegemony. Thus, as a major source for the topic, it is essential to determine the nature of his work.

The early career of Plutarch is difficult to determine but, from a few indications in the sources, a general outline may be established.\textsuperscript{162} He was probably born in the early forties of the first century A.D.\textsuperscript{163} It is certain that he grew up in Chaeronea as he constantly admits to us,\textsuperscript{164} but less certain if he was actually born there.\textsuperscript{165} Very little else of his early life can be determined with surety except that around 66 or 67 A.D. he was a disciple of Ammonius, the Egyptian philosopher. At this point he was about to join an academy after an enthusiastic devotion to mathematics (Plut. \textit{De E Delph.} 7/387f). Because of this, and since his early work displays the ability of a well-trained rhetorician, it is quite possible that he went to the Academy for Rhetoric in Athens.\textsuperscript{166} This may be the move to Athens that he refers to in his \textit{Demosthenes} (Dem. 31. 1). Plutarch also appears to have travelled to Smyrna in Lydia (Plut. \textit{Animine} 1-4/500c-502a) and Alexandria in Egypt, from where he returned back to Chaeronea

\textsuperscript{161} Buckler (1980a), 268-270, provides many examples of all these assertions. See also Stylianou (1998), 1-140, for an analysis of Diodorus’ work, pertaining to book 15.
\textsuperscript{162} Jones (1971), 3-64, provides an excellent discussion of Plutarch’s life in English. See Georgiadou (1997), 1-2 n. 1-4, for further bibliography.
\textsuperscript{163} Jones (1971), 13. He was considered νεος at about 66 or 67 A.D. (De E Delph. 391 E, cf. 385 B), which may easily indicate an age of up to 30 (Xen. Mem. 1. 2. 35; Philostr. \textit{Vita Apollo}. 3. 39).
\textsuperscript{164} Plut. Thes. 27. 8; Cimon 1. 1; Dem. 19. 2; Alex. 9. 3; Lys. 29. 4; Sulla 16-19.
\textsuperscript{165} Jones (1971), 13. For the assertion that a man’s patria is not necessarily the place of his birth, see Syme (1958), 614.
\textsuperscript{166} Jones (1971), 14. Plutarch as a rhetorician is discussed by Krauss (1912).
Plutarch was sent as an envoy to the proconsul of Achaea (Plut. Praec. 20/816d). Though a small task, it was one that implies his prominence of position and favour with the Romans, even at this early stage. We also know that Plutarch had many children and married when he was quite young (Plut. Amat. 2/749b): Jones estimates that, in c. 70 A.D., he was between 25 and 30.  

Plutarch’s career under the Flavians is also poorly recorded, but another passage in Demosthenes tells us that he had to travel to Italy for some time teaching philosophy (Plut. Dem. 2. 2). It is also possible that, during this visit (or visits), he was also acting as a foreign ambassador. With several probable visits to Rome and a career as a philosopher and public figure, Plutarch became a priest of Apollo at Delphi (Plut. Quaes. Conv. 7. 2/700e), certainly a position requiring experience in public office. In the later stages of his life, he seems to have remained in Chaeronea (Put. Dem. 2. 1-2), occasionally travelling as far as Delphi (Plut. De E Delph. 1/384e-385b). It was during the period between Nerva and Hadrian, ending at his death in 120 A.D., that Plutarch wrote the majority of his works.

Plutarch is best known for his Parallel Lives, which were probably written during the last couple decades of his life. The now lost Epameinondas was one of the earliest; the Pelopidas not long after, while the Agesilaus was one of his last. He stated his purpose within his text (Plut. Alex. 1. 2), making it clear that he was not attempting to relate an accurate depiction of history; instead he was looking at instances, which express character and moral qualities, good or bad. Publishing his works in the form of a diptych served to illustrate and compare Roman history with that of the Greeks. In this way, he was reasserting the eminence of the Greeks (particularly in military prowess) by conveying their great figures as equal to that of the Romans’. Thus we see Alexander with Caesar, Agesilaus with Pompey, Pelopidas with Marcellus and Epameinondas with Scipio. He was also willing to convey characters with more disreputable traits, such as Demetrius Poliorcetes and Mark Antony. There is some indication that the idea of the diptych lives came from Cornelius

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167 Jones (1966), 71.  
168 Russell (1968), 130; Jones (1971), 21.  
169 Jones (1966), 66-70.  
Nepos’ own versions.\textsuperscript{171} Certainly he had read Nepos’ work (Plut. \textit{Luc.} 40. 1; \textit{Marc.} 30. 4) and may have taken some inspiration, but none can deny the superiority of Plutarch’s \textit{Vitae}. Additionally, Plutarch may have been inspired by Varro, a contemporary of Nepos, who wrote a collection of portraits on important figures from Greece and Rome called his \textit{Imagines}.\textsuperscript{172}

The loss of the \textit{Epameinondas} is probably the most lamentable of Plutarch’s non-extant work since, as a native Boeotian and lover of Philosophy, he undoubtedly greatly admired the Theban and certainly put a great deal of effort into this particular life. It was paired with a life of a Scipio, which may have been Scipio Aemilianus but was probably more likely to be Scipio Africanus.\textsuperscript{173} Fortunately, much useful information survives in the \textit{Pelopidas}. The sources for the \textit{Pelopidas} have been discussed in detail by Westlake.\textsuperscript{174} He argues that many sources were used; however, Plutarch relied on a “competent fourth century historian” for the bulk of his narrative. Because of similarities between Nepos and Plutarch’s \textit{Pelopidas}, it has been suggested that Plutarch shares in the same source tradition as Nepos.\textsuperscript{175} Westlake considers this to be in the same tradition as Diodorus, whom is widely thought to have copied large amounts of Ephorus. However, he further argues that both Plutarch and Ephorus used the same source, which he deems most likely to be Callisthenes. If this is the case, it is reasonable to assume that the same source (or sources) was used for both the \textit{Epameinondas} and the \textit{Pelopidas}; however, as it stands, the evidence indicates that, while Plutarch made considerable use of Callisthenes, he had certainly read Ephorus and may have supplemented these works with various other writers.\textsuperscript{176}

For the \textit{Agesilaus} Plutarch appears to have been influenced by Xenophon for his narrative. Plutarch cites him by name six times (Plut. \textit{Ages.} 18.1, 19.4, 19.6, 29.2, 34.4), which certainly indicates that Xenophon was a major feature of Plutarch’s research. However, in the text he cites Theopompus three times (Plut. \textit{Ages.} 10.10, 31.4, 32.14-33.1) and, because Xenophon is not cited as his fundamental source, where it appears that he may

\textsuperscript{171} Geiger (1988), 245-256; Georgiadou (1997), 4-5.
\textsuperscript{172} Georgiadou (1997), 4-5.
\textsuperscript{173} Georgiadou (1997), 6-8.
\textsuperscript{174} Westlake (1939), 11-22.
\textsuperscript{175} See below, 43-44, for Nepos’ sources.
have been writing from Xenophon it may have in fact come from Theopompus. This is plausible since Theopompus is known to have used Xenophon’s work (Theopompus FGrH 115 F 21 = Euseb. Praep. Evan. 10. 3).\textsuperscript{177} The fact that Plutarch includes information that Xenophon omits is also indicative of another source. For example, he describes the confrontation between Agesilaus and Epameinondas (Plut. Ages. 28.1-2) and the founding of Megalopolis (Plut. Ages. 34.1), both of which Xenophon failed to mention. Plutarch also cites by name Theophrastos (2.3), Duris (3.1), Dioscorides (35.1) and Hieronymous of Rhodes (13.4). Because of this evidence, Cawkwell concludes that the work appears to be mostly ‘independent’ of Xenophon.\textsuperscript{178} In addition to this, it is also possible that, like Nepos, he relied on Ephorus (or even Callisthenes) greatly.\textsuperscript{179}

Another significant contribution to the historical record is found in Plutarch’s \textit{De Genio Socratis}, which is a philosophical treatise consisting of Socratic discussions between prominent Theban aristocrats. It is, however, at the same time embroiled in history with the liberation of Thebes from Sparta in 379 being described in detail simultaneously with philosophical debate. Plutarch makes Epameinondas one of the story’s protagonists. Seen as intentionally modelled on Plato’s \textit{Phaedo}, the treatise has been interpreted by modern observers as a way of creating a direct link between philosophical debate and its practical application in society; hence, Epameinondas’ involvement in the liberation.\textsuperscript{180} Unlike Plutarch’s account of the liberation in his \textit{Pelopidas}, the \textit{De Genio Socratis} gives equal credit to all the conspirators, thus offering what is perhaps a more historical and less biographical account.\textsuperscript{181} Despite a wealth of dubious characters and instances, the work can be reconciled with other accounts of the liberation.\textsuperscript{182}

As well as this, Plutarch makes reference to Epameinondas in at least 41 other works, often multiple times. This anecdotal material often contains unique information but generally serves to confirm some specific details about the Theban’s life. Most significant of these are the 24 anecdotes about Epameinondas contained within the \textit{Regum et Imperatorum

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{177} See Morison \textit{BNJ} 115 T 27.
\textsuperscript{178} Cawkwell (1976), 64-65.
\textsuperscript{179} Cartledge (1987), 69-71. See also Shipley (1997), 46-55.
\textsuperscript{181} Georgiadou (1997), 39-43.
\textsuperscript{182} See below, 73-77.
\end{flushleft}
Apophthegmata, along with further anecdotes on Pelopidas and Agesilaus. Early scholarship on the Apophthegmata argued that another writer, perhaps posthumously, compiled the collection from Plutarch’s Vitae; however, this idea was subsequently quashed and it is now generally accepted that the work is genuine Plutarch. More recent study has gone further to argue the possibility that Plutarch composed these Apophthegmata as a collection of notes designed to assist in his arrangement and creation of his Vitae. Even further study has argued it is perhaps more likely that they were either composed from the Vitae themselves or even assembled from a common collection of notes or memoirs (ὑπομνήματα). Regardless of the exact purpose of their composition and, even if they were compiled by someone else, these studies demonstrate that the Regum et Imperatorum Apophthegmata is intrinsically related to the Vitae. The significance of this fact manifests itself quite clearly for my study: Plutarch’s non-extant life of Epameinondas must indeed have been composed of many, if not all, of the anecdotes in these Apophthegmata, with only minor contextual differences, as Pelling has demonstrated. It is a tempting prospect to think one might be able to reconstruct the missing life from this remaining source material. The 40 other works that reference Epameinondas are paralleled by many of the Apophthegmata, though many more are unique.

Nepos

The dates concerning Cornelius Nepos’ birth are far from certain. Scholars have given estimates ranging from around 110 to 100. We know that he was a native of Cisalpine Gaul and, because Pliny the Elder refers to him as “a dweller of the Po River” (padi accolae), it has often been supposed that he may have come from Ticinum. It seems that before long, he immigrated to Rome, where he would spend most of his life residing. From Pliny the Younger we also know that Nepos was not of senatorial rank; however, he was praised for his good character (Plin. Ep. 5. 4. 6). He was friends with Atticus (Nep. Att. 13. 7)

183 Vollmann (1869), 210-234; Babbitt (1949), 1-7.
184 For the extensive discussions and bibliography pertaining to these arguments, see Pelling (2002), 65-90.
185 See Frakes (2017), 461-467.
186 Rolfe (1947), 355; Conte (1987), 221. See Horsfall (1989), xv n. 1, for a list of the various treatments on the life of Nepos.
and Cicero, to whom he exchanged letters with (Macrob. Sat. 2. 1. 14; Suet. Jul. 55). Catullus also dedicated a book of poetry to him (Catul. 1).\footnote{The sincerity of Catullus’ praise of Nepos has been disputed. Though there is likely to be some irony in his phrasing it is doubtful that it was meant to be sarcastic or scathing, see Rauk (1997), 319-332; Stem (2012), 1-11.} Though he was not of the ruling class, he was certainly held in high esteem amongst them. Nepos died sometime during the reign of Augustus as is attested twice by Pliny the Elder (Plin. Nat. Hist. 9. 137; 10. 60), probably after 32 B.C.\footnote{Conte (1987), 221.}

The greater bulk of Nepos’ work is unfortunately lost but it appears that he wrote in a variety of literary genres. These include a book on poetry, a universal history, a collection of anecdotes and a geographical treatise.\footnote{For a list of these non-extant works and the relevant references to them see Rolfe (1947), 356-358.} His largest work was the De Viris Illustribus, which comprised of 16 books of short biographies on the lives of famous generals, kings, historians, orators, statesmen, philosophers, scholars and poets. These biographies were compiled together as comparisons, much in the same way as Plutarch’s Parallel Lives, with foreigners (usually Greek) contrasted with Romans. However, only the lives of the foreign generals have survived with the exception of a brief sketch on the life of Cato and a life of Atticus.

In general, scholarship on Nepos’ work has been very critical, perhaps culminating in Horsfall’s scathing summation of his literary ability: “Nepos is an intellectual pygmy whom we find associating uneasily with the literary giants of his generation”.\footnote{Horsfall (1982), 290.} However, there is now plenty of scholarship, which has taken the focus away from Nepos’ simplistic style and attempted to demonstrate his methodology as being appropriate for his purpose. In a relatively neutral article, Lord demonstrated the wide range of topics that Nepos peruses throughout his work, which are related to his purposes as a biographer.\footnote{Lord (1927), 498-503.} Within his surviving work Nepos (like Plutarch) stresses that he is writing biography not history: “…on which I feel uneasy, for if I explain the matter, I will not appear to be recounting his life, but will appear to be writing history” (Nep. Pel. 1.1).\footnote{...quod vereor, si res explicare, ne non vitam eius narrare, sed historiam videar scribere.} By asserting the existence of a specific difference between the conception of biography and history, Nepos is defining his own

\begin{itemize}
\item[187] The sincerity of Catullus’ praise of Nepos has been disputed. Though there is likely to be some irony in his phrasing it is doubtful that it was meant to be sarcastic or scathing, see Rauk (1997), 319-332; Stem (2012), 1-11.
\item[188] Conte (1987), 221.
\item[189] For a list of these non-extant works and the relevant references to them see Rolfe (1947), 356-358.
\item[190] Horsfall (1982), 290.
\item[191] Lord (1927), 498-503.
\item[192] ...quod vereor, si res explicare, ne non vitam eius narrare, sed historiam videar scribere.
\end{itemize}
guidelines that have been determined for the selection process of material for his Vitae. McCarty has provided a good analysis of this conception:

…Nepos believes that the biographer should be comprehensive, including whatever materials he deems relevant and necessary for a complete picture; that in his evaluations he should employ the moral and ethical criteria of the culture and era in which each subject lived; that he should dwell on mental qualities but also include some res gestae; and that he should be comparative, trying to present vitae of persons from Rome and from foreign countries, so that the reader may make an evaluation of each. It has been shown that Nepos himself adhered to his own precepts.¹⁹⁴

Indeed, it seems that it was Nepos’ intention to demonstrate that a virtuous life was achieved by the excellence of their character, in spite of any cultural differences with contemporary Roman mores.¹⁹⁵ As a result, scholarship now generally utilizes Nepos primarily for his useful attributes as opposed to the counterproductive, if not misinterpretative method of attacking his style, chronological and factual errors, as well as the unfair comparison with his perceived betters.¹⁹⁶

Nepos cites various sources within his work including Thucydides (Nep. Them. 9; 10; Paus. 2), Theopompos and Timaeus (Nep. Alcib. 11); for Hannibal he used Polybius, Atticus, Sulpicius Blitho, Silenus and Sosilus (Nep. Hann. 13.1, 3). He also cites Xenophon as his source for his life of Agesilaus but implies that he also read other writers (Nep. Ages. 1.1). Despite this, many scholars have denied Nepos’ use of these sources claiming that he obtained his information from Hellenistic biographies by the likes of Antigonus of Carystus, Hermippus and Satyrus.¹⁹⁷ However, this accusation seems based on the belief that Nepos could not have made so many factual errors and still have used these major historians. The fact is there is no conclusive reason to believe he did not make first-hand use of the sources that he cites, particularly as he does not cite these alleged Hellenistic biographies. More recently it has been argued that Nepos quite plausibly did use the sources that he cites.¹⁹⁸ It

¹⁹⁴ McCarty (1974), 86.
¹⁹⁶ See Beneker (2009); Geiger (1985); Dionisotti (1988); Titchener (2003); Pryzwansky (2009). For the most definitive reassessment of Nepos see Stem (2012).
¹⁹⁷ Rolfe (1947), 361; Horsfall (1989), xviii.
¹⁹⁸ Tichener (2003), 88-90.
has also been earlier argued that, in his life of Miltiades and description of the Battle of Marathon, Nepos was using Ephorus as his source.\textsuperscript{199}

For this study the lives of Epameinondas and Pelopidas are of importance, particularly as the former life is one of his largest. He also refers to Epameinondas in his praefatio, along with an isolated reference in his Iphicrates (Plut. Praef. 1. 1-2; Iph. 2. 5). It is certainly clear that Nepos had a particular interest in the Theban statesman.\textsuperscript{200} Though the sources for these lives cannot be determined, there are certainly possible options that have been previously noted (e.g Ephorus or Theopompus). Buckler also speculates that, for the Agesilaus, as well as Xenophon, Nepos may have been using the same source as Plutarch: Callisthenes, Ephorus or Theopompus.\textsuperscript{201} Overall, because of his factual and chronological errors, his use as a source for Epameinondas and the Theban Hegemony is fairly minor except where he helps to confirm the other sources. Despite this, he certainly is useful for understanding the source tradition as a whole and clarifying the overall dispersal of information throughout antiquity, particularly for his influence on Plutarch.

\textit{Pausanias}

Our knowledge of Pausanias himself comes only from within his work. There is, as it seems, no mention of his life from any external source.\textsuperscript{202} It has been suggested that our Pausanias equates with one Pausanias of Damascus, who wrote descriptions of an ancient coastal region. However, this idea has been convincingly disproved, as the latter Pausanias is likely to have written sometime in the late second century B.C.\textsuperscript{203} Unfortunately, without either a prooemium or epilogue, Pausanias tells us very little about himself. We can, however, approximately determine when he was living. It is thought that Pausanias was likely writing his work between 155-180 A.D. and to have lived c. 115-180 A.D.\textsuperscript{204} Though it is not explicitly given to us, Habicht has reasonably determined that Pausanias was probably a

\textsuperscript{199} How (1919), 48-61; Casson (1920), 43-46.
\textsuperscript{200} On Nepos’ portrayal of Epameinondas, Pelopidas and Agesilaus see Stem (2012), 162-229.
\textsuperscript{201} Buckler (1980a), 274. See Georgiadou (1997), 39 n. 86, for bibliography.
\textsuperscript{202} Habicht (1985), 8.
\textsuperscript{203} Diller (1955), 268-269. For a list of those in favour of this see Habicht (1985), 8.
\textsuperscript{204} Habicht (1985), 8-12.
citizen of Magnesia on Mt. Sipylus.\footnote{Habicht (1985), 13-15. See also Frazer (1898a), xix.} He was liable to have been part of the aristocratic class considering his education and he must have travelled extensively to compile his work;\footnote{Levi (1971) 1-2.} therefore, he was probably fairly wealthy. Levi suggests that he may have been a doctor because of his interest in anatomy and devotion to Asklepios, a god of healing,\footnote{Frazer (1898a), xxii-xxiii.} though this cannot be confirmed.

For some 20 odd years between 155-180 A.D. Pausanias travelled, researched and wrote his *Description of Greece* (Ἑλλάδος Περιήγησις). This work was done in 10 volumes including descriptions of all mainland Greek provinces with the exceptions of Aetolia, Acarnania, Epirus, Thessaly and parts of Locris. Despite lacking a *prooemium*, Pausanias states his intentions for his work in book one: to describe all of Greece (Paus. 1. 26. 5). Though the statement is vague it does tell us the scope of his work. He further admits some limitations to his subject matter stating he only set out to describe the most notable objects (Paus. 1. 39. 3; 2. 2. 1).\footnote{Habicht (1985), 7-8; Pretzler (2007), 6-8.} Whatever the reason he left out the aforementioned provinces,\footnote{Habicht (1985), 3; Hutton (2005), 241-272; Pretzler (2007), 3-4. Not only the scope, but as Hutton argues, the manner in which it was written was a wholly new approach.} the work was an immense task to undertake: he provides geographical assessments of large areas, as well as more specific descriptions of sites, whilst being embroiled in local art, architecture and anecdotal history and myth. He may even have been the first person to attempt such a feat.\footnote{A belief first popularised by Willamowitz (1877), 344-347, and adhered to by many since, e.g. Jacoby (1944), 40, n. 12.} Early scholarship appears to have viewed Pausanias as a compiler of other literary sources and that he had not in fact travelled to these places himself.\footnote{For an overview of the historiography on Pausanias see Pretzler (2007), 12-14.} Then for many decades, Pausanias was considered useful only for the Archaeologist of ancient Greece. However, more recently he has received a greater deal of attention and this view has been all but overturned.\footnote{For an overview of Pausanias' historical data see Ebeling (1914), 138-141, 146-150.} Generally, the *Periegesis* is a necessary companion to any topographical survey of mainland Greece. He describes the landscape and cities with accuracy and his numerous additions of mythological and historical detail provides a great accompaniment for many different studies on the history of Greece.\footnote{For an overview of Pausanias' historical data see Ebeling (1914), 138-141, 146-150.}
For a study of the Theban Hegemony, Pausanias is invaluable. He briefly summarizes Xenophon’s *Hellenica* in book one, also bringing our attention to a painting depicting the Battle of Mantinea by Euphranor (Paus. 1. 3. 4). In book three he summarizes the life of Agesilaus (Paus. 3. 9. 1-10. 2), having possibly used Plutarch’s *Agesilaus* as a supplement to the *Hellenica*. In Pausanias’ book on Messenia Epameinondas is mentioned in relation to its reoccupation by the original inhabitants (Paus. 4. 26. 6-8). And in the eighth book the various theories of who killed Epameinondas are offered as well as a eulogy (Paus. 8. 11. 5-10). Most importantly he provides a summary of the life of Epameinondas (Paus. 9. 13. 1-15. 4), which offers several instances of unique information.

It was previously agreed that Pausanias’ source for his segments on Epameinondas came from Plutarch’s lost *Epameinondas*. This argument was generally accepted with very little discussion for or against it. Westlake simply accepts that it is a probability and Cawkwell just admits it is possible without taking sides either way. Shrimpton provides a reasonable argument that Pausanias was liable to have used a *vita* of Epameinondas, which, by comparing the similarities between Pausanias and Plutarch’s *Pelopidas*, concludes that the connection between the two is likely. However, his assertion is firmly based on the hasty conclusion that Plutarch’s *Life* was the only available *Vita* aside from Nepos’ one, which cannot be confirmed. The factual similarities do not conclusively prove that one was paraphrasing the other. In a detailed argument, Tuplin has convincingly demonstrated the uncertainty of any direct connection between the two. The possibility is definitely there, but the assumption must not be made.

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216 Westlake (1939), 12; Cawkwell (1972), 255. For the earliest advocates of this assertion see Willamowitz (1874), 439 n. 2 and Peper (1912), 15 ff.
218 Tuplin (1984), 346-358.
Frontinus

Born c. 35 A.D., Frontinus appears to have had a rather successful career. Bennett suggests he may have been educated at the Alexandrian school of mathematics. He held the consulship three times: in the years 74, 98 and 100 A.D. Sometime after 74 A.D. he was given a military post in Britain by the emperor Vespasian. There he managed to subdue the Silures tribe in Wales and constructed a Roman road known as the Via Julia (Tac. Agr. 17). Later he also took part in a German campaign under Domitian during the uprising of Civilis (Front. Strat. 4. 3. 14). From his return to Rome in 78 to 97 A.D. nothing is known, but in this latter year he was made the water commissioner of Rome, a post, which he held till his death in 103/4 A.D. Amidst this period he wrote his most famous work, De Aqueductu, a treatise on the aqueducts of Rome.

During his unknown years he is presumed to have written much of his works, which were many and varied, including a treatise on farming and one on land surveying. All of his works appear to have been technical and instructional by nature. Frontinus wrote textbooks or field guides with the intention to educate both himself and others. He also wrote at least two military treatises: a De Re Militari, which was apparently entirely theoretical, and a Strategemata. The latter of these two, written in four books, has fortunately survived, though there is some debate as to whether the fourth book was actually written by Frontinus or posthumously added by a later author. Significantly it includes 10 examples of Epameinondas’s leadership, three of Pelopidas’ and several other useful examples including an anecdote of the rarely mentioned Theban general, Pammenes. Frontinus’ source material is unclear: a number of the anecdotes are significantly distinct from Plutarch and Diodorus to suggest that he used something different from them. He may simply have obtained much of the information from other strategemata. It was hardly a novel genre of literature with our

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219 Tac. Hist. 4. 39. He was praetor urbanus in 70 A.D.
220 Bennett (1925), xiii.
221 Mart. Ep. 10. 48. 20; CIL. 3. 2; 8. 7066; 6. 2222.
222 For a relatively full account of Frontinus’ life and works see Bennett (1902) 382-390, with particular attention to his work as water commissioner. Also see Bennett (1925), viii-xxvi; Connor (1923), 1-7, who also provides a literary analysis of the Strategemata.
223 Connor (1923), 5-6; Bennett (1925), xviii-xix.
224 Connor (1923), 93-104; Bennett (1925), xix-xxvi. The arguments tend towards this being the case, but whether it was written shortly after Frontinus’s death or centuries later has not yet been agreed upon.
earliest example being from the fourth century Aeneas Tacticus.\textsuperscript{225} On the other hand, much of the information appears genuine and may certainly originate from the likes of Callisthenes and Ephorus.

\textit{Polyaenus}

Almost 100 years after Frontinus, a similar work was written by Polyaenus. We know he was a Macedonian living in the second century A.D. and the \textit{Suda} refers to him as a rhetorician who wrote a work on Thebes (\textit{Περὶ Θηβῶν}) and one on battle tactics in three books (\textit{Suda s. v. Πολύαινος}). The aforementioned work on tactics does not appear to be referring to his work in eight books known as the \textit{Strategica}. This, as mentioned within his work, was dedicated to the emperors Marcus Aurelius and Verus during the Parthian war (162-165 A.D). He claims that he was too old to take part in the war, but this would be his contribution.\textsuperscript{226}

Though it is unknown what his work on Thebes entailed, it is possible it was a history. If that was in fact the case, it would not be too farfetched to presume he may have written about the Theban Hegemony. His surviving work, however, the \textit{Strategica}, like Frontinus’ work, is a technical manual dedicated to examples of great generalship. By contrast, however, instead of being organised by topic, it is, rather, organized by each individual general and each general is organized into his \textit{ethnos}. The work is not generally considered terribly useful for its historicity,\textsuperscript{227} but some of his examples can certainly be confirmed by more reliable sources. Significantly, he wrote a total of 15 \textit{strategemata} on Epameinondas, three on Pelopidas and two on Gorgidas. Though some of the examples are somewhat suspect and the text may have been corrupted, they offer us some very significant historical facts. If Polyaenus did indeed write about the Theban Hegemony, it may be asserted that his knowledge on the subject would have been substantial. There is also some

\textsuperscript{225} On Aeneas Tacticus, see Burliga (2008), 92-101.
\textsuperscript{227} For Polyaenus’ use as an ‘historian’ see Pretzler (2010), 85-107, and for his place within the genre of \textit{strategemata} see Wheeler (2010), 7-54.
indication that he used Ephorus as a source for book three. However, like Frontinus, Polyaeus’ actual source material is nebulous and he may simply have used other existing military manuals and reorganized them to suit his own system.

Polybius

Also worth mentioning is the Arcadian historian of the second century B.C., Polybius. His history of the rise of the Roman Republic makes no less than seven references to Epameinondas. As well as several offhand references he most interestingly briefly describes the significance of Pelopidas, claiming that he deserves credit for encouraging Epameinondas to get involved in politics (Polyb. 8. 1). Polybius also describes the events leading up to the Battle of Mantinea in relative detail (Polyb. 9. 8. 1-13), which can be confirmed by the account of Xenophon (Xen. Hell. 7. 5. 8). He makes it undoubtedly clear that he was familiar with all the standard fourth century works, referencing both the likes of Ephorus and Callisthenes (Polyb. 12. 25f. 1-5; 4. 33. 2).

Athenaeus

The Greek rhetorician and grammarian of the late second and early third century refers to Epameinondas six times and includes two references that do not appear anywhere else. He tells us the names of teachers who taught him how to play the flute and how he showed a pomegranate to the Athenians in order to settle a territorial dispute (Athen. 5. 84; 14. 16). His references demonstrate knowledge of anecdotes that illustrate Epameinondas’ character. He cites Ephorus and Callisthenes several times, as well as frequently citing

228 Bianco (2010), 69-84.
229 Polyb. 4. 32. 10, 33. 8-9, 6. 43. 1-7, 8. 35. 1, 9. 8. 1-13, 12. 25f. 1-5, 32. 22. 6-7.
230 For discussion of Polybius’ account of the Battle of Mantinea see Walbank (1967), 127-130. He suggests Callisthenes as his most likely sources, considering his criticisms of Ephorus’ account of the battle (Polyb. 12. 25f. 1-5).
231 For the life and works of Polybius see Shuckburgh (1889), xvii-lx; Walbank (1957), 1-37; Paton (1922), 11-28.
Theopompus and Duris of Samos.\textsuperscript{232} However, this is just the sort of information he might have found in anecdotal collections\textsuperscript{233} or a biographical source such as Plutarch’s *Epameinondas*\textsuperscript{234}.

*Strabo*

Just as Pausanias found it necessary to talk about Epameinondas in his description of Boeotia the Greek philosopher who wrote his *Geographica* in the early first century A.D. felt obliged to give recognition as well. Strabo refers to him four times mentioning both the Battles of Mantinea and Leuctra (Strabo 8. 8. 2; 9. 2. 2, 39). In one of the references he quotes Ephorus, which leaves little doubt as to where he obtained his knowledge of the subject (Strabo 9. 2. 5).\textsuperscript{235}

*Diogenes*

In his *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, which was written sometime between 200 and 500 A.D., Diogenes Laertes refers to Epameinondas four times. Most significantly he reveals the existence of another Xenophon, who wrote a biography of Epameinondas and Pelopidas (Diog. Laert. 6. 2. 39). Though little can be said of this otherwise unknown biographer, his existence is significant for historiography. Diogenes also makes reference to Mantinea and twice refers to Lysis as the Pythagorean tutor of Epameinondas (Diog. Laert. 2. 6. 54; 6. 2. 39; 8. 1. 6). Diogenes was well read on at least one of the major sources of the Theban Hegemony (Diog. Laert. 2. 6. 54), therefore his references may have come from Ephorus as well as this unknown Xenophon.\textsuperscript{236}

\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{232}] See Jacoby (1923-1958) for a collection of these citations.
\item[\textsuperscript{233}] For Athenaeus’ use of anecdotal material see Dalby (2000), 372-383.
\item[\textsuperscript{234}] For the life and works of Athenaeus see Gulick (1951), vii-xvii; Olson (2006), vii-xvi.
\item[\textsuperscript{235}] For the life and works of Strabo see Jones (1917), xiii-xxx.
\item[\textsuperscript{236}] For the life and works of Diogenes Laertes see Hicks (1938), 9-38, and more recently for his works see Dorandi (2013), 1-57.
\end{itemize}
Justin

Justin assembled his *Epitome*, perhaps around the early third century A.D., from Pompeius Trogus’ *Historiae Philippicae*, which was probably written in the late first century B.C. or early first century A.D. Justin’s account of the period of Epameinondas’ career is confined to just a few paragraphs (Just. 6. 6-9): it is often rather confused and provides little unique information. However, it is clear from the surviving *prologi* that Trogus included a much more detailed account of the events relating to Epameinondas. These include: the invasion of Laconia (370/69), the Battle of Mantinea and a discussion of the impact of his death on the whole of Greece (Trog. *Prol.* 6). He also commented on Philip’s stay in Thebes and later refers to Epameinondas’ naval voyage. Since his work was centred on the rise and fall of Macedonian power it has often been suggested that he used a Philippic source, particularly that of Theopompus, who, like Trogus, made many lengthy digressions. However, it is perhaps unwise to commit to such an assumption as we simply do not know enough about Trogus’ source material. Indeed, Hammond has made a reasonable case for Marsyas of Pella, who wrote a history of Macedonia down to 331 (*Suda* s. v. Μαρσύας). It is also possible that he made use of Anaximenes for this period as well. In general, it is likely that Trogus made use of a major work for each book but may have supplemented this with other secondhand material.

_Ctesiphon_

Pseudo Plutarch mentions one Ctesiphon, who wrote a Boeotian History, though nothing further is known about the work. The one surviving fragment, from the third book, mentions a story in which Epameinondas returned home from fighting the Spartans and left his son, Stesimbrotus, in command while instructing him not to engage the enemy. He then

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237 Though Syme (1988), 358-371, argues for a date closer to 390 A.D., but Alonso-Núñez (1987), 61, suggests a *terminus ante quem* of 226 A.D. since there is no mention of the Sassanian take-over of Iran from the Arsacid kings.

238 Just. 7. 9. 2: Philip at Thebes, see below, 165-167; Just. 16. 4. 3-4: naval voyage, see Chapter 9.

239 Flower (1994), 5-6.


goes against his father’s orders and is victorious. On his return to Thebes, Epameinondas crowns him in recognition of the success before cutting his throat. In itself the anecdote is representative of Epameinondas’ penchant for discipline, which may be exemplified in the, perhaps more believable, examples of his execution of a guard sleeping on duty and his vigilant watch over Thebes while the rest of the city celebrated a festival (Front. Strat. 3. 12. 3; Plut. Ad Princ. 4/781c). The fantastic nature of the story is a curiosity: while we can only speculate, it may in fact be indicative of the existence of a partly mythological account of the Theban’s endeavours. Such stories could have developed in Boeotia or Messenia where he would continue to be revered for generations. However, it is also possible that, given the brutal nature of the story, it may have been intended as a vilification of the general by recording anecdotes that put him in a bad light. If this is the case, in spite of some clearly grave errors, this work probably contained an alternate perspective on Epameinondas beyond the generally laudatory one that survives. On the other hand, since a number of comparable Roman stories exist, the work may have been developed to create a parallel between Epameinondas and Roman generals.

Others

Apart from at least four references in the Suda and six from Cicero, there are at least 12 other occurrences of Epameinondas’ name in ancient literature. These include Appian, Epictetus, Pliny the Elder, Ammianus Marcellinus, Aulus Gellius, Aelianus Tacticus, Claudius Aelianus, Themistius, Arrian, Valerius Maximus and Aristotle. They all variously recall some well-known character trait or deed by Epameinondas. These references are significant because they reflect his legacy and some of the views that their contemporary audiences would have shared.

242 Ctesiphon FGrH 249 F1 = [Plut.] Parallela Minora 12/308d-e.
243 E.g. the fourth century Roman general, Titus Manlius Torquatus, was known to have executed his son for a very similar reason and in a similar manner (Livy 8. 6-7). See Ceccarelli BN/ 294 F 1.
244 See Appendix I, for citations.
Conclusion

On examination, essentially two major traditions emerge from our surviving literature: the first is that of Xenophon, whose *Hellenica* survives and provides our most detailed account. Though he would certainly influence later writers his work was obviously not the best source of information on the Theban Hegemony. For this another tradition emerged through Callisthenes and Ephorus. It is possible that Ephorus’ primary source for the Theban ascension was Callisthenes; as a result, it is appropriate to group them together as a single tradition. Though Ephorus’ use of Callisthenes has been disputed it is often impossible to distinguish between the two when used by the likes of Plutarch and Nepos. Intertwined amongst this is the remnant of a third tradition from Theopompus, who was clearly used by a number of ancient writers for relevant events; though there is little indication that he had much influence on our major sources for information on Epameinondas. It is also possible that any of the other fourth century historians discussed could have influenced our remaining material; however, this remains speculative and we are forced to conclude that the vast majority of our knowledge on Epameinondas probably comes from Callisthenes and/or Ephorus. While the pool of information on the topic remains unsatisfactory, we can be certain that the literature on which we have to rely had access to a variety of detailed fourth century sources.
Chapter 3
Epameinondas Before 371 B.C.

The Early Years – Origins, Education and Philosophy

There is barely any information attested about Epameinondas’ early years save for a few snippets from Plutarch, Nepos and Pausanias. Of course, this is due in part to the loss of Plutarch’s Epameinondas, which would surely have contained invaluable additions to the source material. However, Plutarch points out how the name of Epameinondas’ mother had not been recorded (Plut. Ages. 19. 6), which may indicate that any account of his younger years was not preserved in great detail. There could, in fact, have been a paucity of information that survived beyond the people that knew him personally. Certainly, Nepos and Diodorus, who were writing a century before Plutarch, have little else to add. Perhaps a reason for this was the initial lack of acknowledgement for Epameinondas’ significance by his contemporaries. Conversely, any records there may have been of such information were quite possibly destroyed during the destruction of Thebes in 335. For whatever reason, there is very little to go on, but it is definitely worth perusing all the evidence in order to establish everything we can discover about his early life.

The only bearing we have on his age is a slightly ambiguous reference from Plutarch in which he states that, by the time he was 40, no one had taken much notice of him until afterwards, when he apparently made a name for himself (Plut. De Latenter 4/1129c). The word ὅστερον seems to imply that he did not obtain a position of trust (πιστευθεὶς) and leadership (ἄρξας) until after he had turned 40. And only when he had obtained these, did he go on to “πόλιν ἀπολλυμένην ἔσωσε”, etc. What Plutarch means, without a doubt, is that he was certainly 40 before the Battle of Leuctra. How long before, on the other hand, is much

245 Shrimpton (1970); Shrimpton (1971b), 310-318. The earliest accounts that appear to take note of Epameinondas’ significance may well have been written over two decades after his death.
246 Ἐπαμεινώνδας γοῦν εἰς τεσσαρακοστῶν ἐτῶν ἄγνοιες οὐδὲν ὄνησε Θηβαίως ὅστερον δὲ πιστευθεὶς καὶ ἄρξας τὴν μὲν πόλιν ἀπολλυμένην ἔσωσε, τὴν δ’ Ἑλλάδα δουλεύοσαν ἠλευθέρωσε.
more difficult to tell. Early scholars have tended to estimate a birth date of c. 418 B.C. This date implies that they started counting from after the liberation of Thebes from Sparta in 378. This assumption fails to consider a very important factor. Plutarch indicates that he was 40 just before he obtained trust and leadership in Thebes. Although his minor role in helping besiege the Cadmea may have won him a certain boost in prominence, there is no conclusive evidence to indicate that he had been made a boeotarch until 371 when he attended the peace treaty negotiations in Sparta (Plut. Ages. 27. 3-4). During this meeting Epameinondas played the role of an ambassador for Thebes, which does not in itself imply that he was a boeotarch; however, he would shortly act as a general for the army at Leuctra, therefore we can assume he was at the head of government by this stage. Of course, this was not necessarily the first time he had been elected, though it does indicate the possibility that he had not been until 371. Therefore, it may be reasonable to suppose that he turned 40 between the years 378 and 371. Because of this it would be more appropriate to say that he was born around 418 to 411, admitting that we are unable to be more accurate than that.

Epameinondas was born to a notable family, which Pausanias informs us were known as the Spartoi (Σπάρτοι), meaning the sown men. They are supposed to have been a race that spawned from a dragon’s teeth by the legendary Cadmus, who, with the help of the Spartoi, would found the city of Thebes ([Apollod.] Biblio, 3. 4). Because of the family’s link to the foundation myth of the city, they were likely to be descended from the early aristocracy. This denotes an eminent position in Theban society, one which would have traditionally held a prominent standing within government, though the sources indicate that they were relatively poor by Epameinondas’ time. His father was called Polymnis, who may have had at least one other son named Caphisias (Plut. De geno Socratis). Though this is our

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247 Pomtow (1870), 31; Curtius (1872), 337. Swoboda (1900), 2675, is suspicious of all the evidence and decided not to come to any conclusion.

248 Though it occurred in the winter of 379/8, see below, 73.

249 Nep. Epam. 2. 1; Paus. 9. 13. 1; 8. 11. 8; Plut. Pel. 3. 1.


251 The poverty of Epameinondas is probably exaggerated in the surviving text, since he was an aristocrat and had an excellent education, he was not likely to be destitute. See Fortina (1958), 7; Georgiadou (1997), 71.

252 Nep. Epam. 1; Paus. 8. 52. 4; 9. 12. 6; Ael. Var. Hist. 11. 9. His father is called Cleommis in Paus. 4. 31. 10. Fortina (1958), 5 n. 3, simply considers this an error from Pausanias, but it appears that this discrepancy may have derived from some form of hero cult worship in Messenia, see Ogden (2004), 142.
only source for him, there is little reason to suspect that Plutarch simply fictionalized a familial tie for dramatic purposes. Sources for his name may have existed in earlier biographical or official records. Such information Plutarch would certainly have had access to, being a native Boeotian. Within the work, Caphisias appears to be a Theban emissary at Athens, which may be an indication of an active role within the government. If this is the case, his name could have even appeared in a historical source such as Callisthenes.

He had a diverse education, including a prominent musical background. He learnt to sing and play the lyre or cithara as an accompaniment from an apparent virtuoso named Dionysius. He also learnt the aulos (αὐλός) from Olympiodorus and Orthagoras and was taught to dance by Calliphrion (Nep. Epam. 2.1-2; Athen. 5. 84/4. 184e). It was common for a Greek youth, probably mostly from the upper classes, to have a musical education, the extent of which is discussed by Aristotle who concludes that such things should be discontinued after youth (Aristot. Pol. 8. 1340b20). For the average Athenian, the lyre was the instrument of choice, leaving the aulos and cithara for the professional. However, via Athenaeus, Chamaeleon of Heraclea says that it was common for the Thebans to learn the aulos (Athen. 4. 184d; cf. Plut. Alc. 2. 4-6). The cithara, on the other hand, would have been a bit more unusual for an amateur to learn, it was then, more likely that he learnt the lyre. Epameinondas’ apparently broad musical education possibly had some connection with his instruction from Lysis; however, it is perhaps more apt to conclude that his musical training was aristocratic. There is no evidence that he continued to play his instruments into adulthood, which would fit well with Aristotle’s model of the average person’s musical training. But it must be noted that the presumption here is that every Greek citizen received a similar training, though it should be admitted that the biographies of Greek figures only very rarely specifically state this for an individual. At the very least, the fact that his musical

254 Rolfe (1929), 166-167, translates “citharizare” as lyre (λυρα), a verb that is used to describe someone playing either the lyre or cithara (κιθάρα), therefore it could be either instrument, see Anderson (1994), 36.
255 See Comotti (1989), 1-7, 69; West (1992), 34-36; Landels (1999), 6-8, for the application of music in private education and performance.
256 Buckler (1993), 106.
257 Plutarch tends to have particular biographical reasons for emphasizing a musical education: Themistocles was apparently a poor musician to which, in his defence, he asserted that improving the state was a far greater achievement. Alcibiades preferred the lyre to the aulos since the latter caused
background is mentioned so prominently, indicates his continued proficiency, perhaps above that of the average Greek.

He was also instructed in Philosophy by the Pythagorean, Lysis of Tarentum.\textsuperscript{258} Though it is far from certain whether or not a significant Pythagorean community existed at Thebes during this period,\textsuperscript{259} the presence of other purveyors of Pythagoras such as Philolaus, Simmias and Cebe, indicates a reasonably welcoming atmosphere (Plat. \textit{Phaedo} 61d-e).\textsuperscript{260} The influence of this teacher on Epameinondas is demonstrated by many of his actions, though the evidence indicates that he did not fully adhere to their principles and should not be considered a Pythagorean philosopher.\textsuperscript{261} However, the sources say that he had a deep attachment to Lysis, and surpassed all the other students (Nep. \textit{Epam.} 2. 2), even considering his teacher’s position as that of a πατήρ (Plut. \textit{De Gen. Soc.} 13/583c).\textsuperscript{262} If it is true that he did, in fact, study under his teacher with such gusto, it is also likely that a certain degree of Pythagorean wisdom influenced his way of thinking. Buckler is right in concluding that Epameinondas’ Pythagorean education did not dominate his abilities as a general or statesman,\textsuperscript{263} but the statement “that Pythagoreanism played an essentially inconsequential role in Epameinondas' thinking”, goes too far.

In fact, Buckler’s own arguments admit the influence that the teachings of Pythagoras had over him. During the liberation of Thebes, Epameinondas refused to be involved in the killing of his fellow countrymen.\textsuperscript{264} He convinced the Thebans to be merciful

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\textsuperscript{259} Demand (1982), 70-84. Though Buckler (1983), 556, is right in asserting the unreliability of the sources, this does not outright remove the possibility. See also Minar (1942), 92-93.
\textsuperscript{260} Kahn (2001), 48-49; Burkert (1972), 227-228.
\textsuperscript{261} See Buckler (1993), 104-108, for an overview of the influence of Lysis’ teachings on Epameinondas.
\textsuperscript{262} Edelstein (1943), 34, points to the use of the term “father” by the disciple to his teacher according to the Hippocratic \textit{Oath}, which is also prevalent amongst mysteries, see Burkert (1972), 4-5. Though the association of \textit{Oath} with Pythagoreans is no longer prevalent, see Temkin (2001), 1-28.
\textsuperscript{263} Buckler (1993), 104-108, argues against the conclusions of Lévêque and Vidal-Naquet (1960), 294-308; Vidal-Naquet (1981), 95, who portray Epameinondas as a Pythagorean philosopher general.
\textsuperscript{264} Plut. \textit{Pel.} 12.2; Nep. \textit{Epam.} 10.3; \textit{Pel.} 4.1.
\end{flushright}
to the Orchomenians and spared the lives of some Boeotian exiles (Diod. 15. 57. 1; Paus. 9. 15. 4). He also, allegedly, had no involvement in the destruction of Orchomenus.\textsuperscript{265} All of these instances may be attributed to the teachings he received from Lysis, as we know that the Pythagoreans were opposed to civil strife and bloodshed.\textsuperscript{266} He was also known for his relatively modest living conditions, his frugality at dinner parties and refusal to accept bribes.\textsuperscript{267} He chastised himself for wasting olive oil and, after the Battle of Leuctra, he reprimanded himself for feeling excessive pride over the victory.\textsuperscript{268} He would often wait for everyone to finish speaking before conveying his opinion, like the Pythagorean principle of silence.\textsuperscript{269} He essentially entertained a “genuine contempt for renown and wealth”.\textsuperscript{270} What we may conclude is that Epameinondas was certainly affected by many of the ethical virtues of the Pythagoreans. Though he probably never considered himself an outright Pythagorean, he surely saw the wisdom in many of their ideals, which would explain why he adhered to several of them. It is more than likely that he studied various philosophies and came up with his own criteria that members of the aristocracy should adhere to. Though Buckler’s arguments are essentially sound, it does appear that his wording minimizes the influence that Lysis’ teaching clearly had, considering these multiple examples.

\textit{Historical Background}

Understanding the world in which Epameinondas grew up is essential to understanding the motivations behind his decisions. This brings us all the way back into the period following the Persian wars, nearly a century prior to the Theban supremacy. After the Persians had finally been driven out of mainland Greece the city of Thebes appears to have fallen into a level of despondency far below its position in the sixth century as hegemon of the Boeotian League. This honour seems to have been taken over by its close neighbours, the Tanagrans.\textsuperscript{271} Diodorus tells us that Thebes allied itself with Sparta after the Phocian

\textsuperscript{265} Plut. \textit{Comp. Pel. and Marc.} 1.3; Paus. 9. 15. 3.
\textsuperscript{266} Iam. \textit{VP} 34, 75; Porph. \textit{VP} 22; \textit{DL} 8. 23.
\textsuperscript{269} Iam. \textit{VP} 68, 163, 188; Plut. \textit{De Recta} 3/39b; \textit{De Gen. Soc}. 23/592f.
\textsuperscript{270} Buckler (1993), 106-108.
\textsuperscript{271} As is apparent from the coinage of the period, see Head (1881), 196-199.
campaign of 459/8 (Diod. 11. 79. 5). Then, in 457/6, Thebes proposed to the Spartan force present in Boeotia that they would fight against Athens, acting as a counterweight to their power (Diod. 11. 81. 2-3). However, after the battles of Tanagra and Oenophyta, the Athenians took control of all of Boeotia. In spite of any agreement with Sparta the Thebans were left to the mercy of Athens and, as a result, their oligarchic government was replaced with a pro-Athenian democracy. Thus, the Athenians essentially ruled Thebes for a decade. In 447 a Theban led Boeotian revolt led to the Athenian slaughter at Coronea and the liberation of Boeotia from Athenian control. From this, Thebes re-established the oligarchy and managed to attain its position as the leading state of a refurbished Boeotian League.\footnote{272}

By the beginning of the Peloponnesian War, in 432, under the pro-Spartan faction of Eurymachus and his son, Leontiades, Thebes controlled most of Boeotia and was firmly allied with Sparta. The league had a major involvement in the war effort, providing troops for a number of the Spartan led invasions of Attica. They proved themselves militarily capable of defending Boeotia against Athenian attacks without help from Sparta. However, the Thebans had also begun pursuing endeavours with the sole intention of increasing their own wealth and influence. These included the siege and destruction of Plataea (432-427), the campaign and victory of Delium (424/3) and the dioecism of Thespiae (423). Later they would also annex the significant port of Oropus from Athens (412/11) and capture the town of Oenoe in Ozolian Locris (411). All of these activities greatly enhanced the power of the Boeotian League; but, at the same time led to increasing Spartan anxiety over the possibility that Theban power might prove dangerous to their own.\footnote{273} In 421 Thebes, along with Corinth, Elis, Mantinea and Megara, refused to sign the Peace of Nicias (Thuc. 5. 17. 2). This act, though not necessarily damaging to the alliance between the Boeotian League and Sparta, shows that the pro-Spartan faction did not possess complete control of the federal council. After the peace, while negotiating with Athens for the return of Pylos, Sparta attempted to convince the Thebans to return Athenian prisoners and relinquish control of Panactum, a fort on the frontier of Attica, which had been captured by the Boeotian League (Thuc. 5. 3. 5, 35. 5, 39. 2). The Thebans initially refused but later accepted the terms on the condition that

\footnote{272} On Boeotia during this period see Buck (1979), 141-168, who, however, rejects much of Diodorus' testimony. Demand (1982), 31-35, on the other hand argues that aspects of his account are accurate.

\footnote{273} On the Boeotian League's role during the Peloponnesian war see Demand (1982), 40-44; Buck (1994), 9-26.
Sparta conclude an alliance with the Boeotian League against Athens, not as subordinates, but on equal terms (Thuc. 5. 59. 3). At last the league could now be officially considered a major power, rivalling that of Sparta and Athens.²⁷⁴

By the end of the Decelean War (404) the Boeotian League had obtained large amounts of booty from successive raids into Attica, but, from this point, relations between Thebes and Sparta had begun to deteriorate. The anti-Spartan faction of Ismenias gained support when, in 405/4, the Spartans would not agree to the Boeotians’ demand to destroy Athens. Soon afterwards, the league gave insult to King Agis when it demanded booty from Decelea for Ptoan Apollo. Though the Spartans conceded, they would, 10 years later, still feel raw about it. Then, even more drastically, Boeotia gave aid and shelter to exiled Athenian democrats, after which they refused Sparta and the Thirty Tyrants’ request to extradite them. It is clear that, by this stage, Boeotian-Spartan relations had become openly unfriendly. This state of affairs began to escalate when the league, along with Corinth, refused to join Sparta on a campaign against Elis in 400/399. In the following year (399/8), the Spartans appear to have aggravated the Boeotians when they marched an army through their territory in order to quell stasis in Heraclea Trachinia.²⁷⁵ While Ismenias’ faction may not have been strong enough to aggressively oppose the operation, the incident probably enhanced popular discontent towards Sparta.²⁷⁶ In 397 the Boeotians refused to send troops on the Spartan led expedition against Persia and then, in 396, Agesilaus was prevented from sacrificing at Aulis by Boeotian officials. This incident ensured the Spartan king’s permanent hatred of Thebes and the Boeotian League. By this stage tensions between the two powers had grown to breaking point.²⁷⁷

The powder keg ignited when a dispute originating between Locrians and Phocians brought both Sparta and the Boeotian League into war with one another in the opening conflict of the Corinthian War, referred to by Plutarch as the Boeotian War (Plut. Lys. 27. 1). In the summer of 395 two separate Spartan forces led by Lysander and Pausanias marched

²⁷⁵ Diod. 14. 38 4-5; Plut. Lys. 22. 2; Apo. Lac. 54.7/229c.
²⁷⁶ On Heraclea Trachinia as a source of contention between Sparta and the Boeotian League, see Buck (1994), 15-16.
²⁷⁷ On these events see below, 66-67.
upon Boeotia from the west and south respectively. The league quickly formed an alliance with Athens and managed to defeat the western invaders at the Battle of Haliartus in which Lysander was killed before Pausanias could arrive. The campaign thus went in the Boeotians’ favour, though Orchomenus was occupied by a Spartan garrison.278 Following this, in the winter of 395 a congress at Corinth concluded a grand alliance consisting of Corinth, Argos, Athens and Boeotia.279 Then, in 395/4, Ismenias led a force into Locrian territories, bringing many Spartan held cities and allies to their side. After this he invaded Phocias with just under 6,000 troops and defeated the Phocians in a difficult fight, leaving some 1,000 enemy dead and 500 of their own (Diod. 14. 82).

Following this, the Spartans began to mobilize an army at home under the command of Aristodemus and Agesilaus was recalled back from Asia Minor with his veteran force. Both armies fought in large-scale battles: at Nemea and Coronea respectively.280 Although these were both tactical victories for the Spartans, in each engagement, the Boeotians had held their ground and very little overall was gained from their successes.281 Throughout the war the faction of Ismenias appears to have generally held sway; though there were some attempts at peace, the Boeotians were predominantly enthusiastic at pushing the war effort, in spite of the cost. By 392 the alliance suffered a major defeat when a Spartan force entered the walls of Corinth and wiped out a Boeotian garrison, along with capturing the port of Lecheum, shipsheds and all (Xen. Hell. 4. 4. 7-13; Diod. 14. 86. 3-4).282 In spite of the loss, the war was pursued with some effort until the Peace of Antalcidas, in 387/6, when the Boeotians were the only ally still willing to fight Sparta. The struggle had been costly for all sides and would prove disastrous for the league. Without support from any major ally and threat of further invasion from Agesilaus, Thebes was forced to relinquish any influence over the poleis of Boeotia and thereby effectively dismantling the Boeotian League. The loss for Thebes was tremendous and many Thebans would have felt led astray by the anti-Spartan

278 Xen. Hell. 3. 5; Hell. Oxy. 18. 3; Paus. 3. 5. 3-5, 9. 8-11. For the campaign and battle of Haliartus see Westlake (1985), 119-133; Buck (1994), 37-39.
280 Xen. Hell. 4. 2-3; Diod. 14. 82. 10-83. 4, 84. 1-2; Paus. 3. 9. 12-13.
faction. Following the peace, it is apparent that power in Thebes went back to Leontiades but within a few years Ismenias began to come back to the fore.\textsuperscript{283}

Although Epameinondas would not fully concern himself with the welfare of his state until after the Spartan occupation of Thebes in 382, it is from the Peace of Antalcidas, when the chain of events that led to his ascendancy truly began. Through childhood, Epameinondas witnessed a period of transition in Thebes from a largely pro-Spartan policy to one of aggression. At the same time, it was also a time of prosperity for the league: from the Peace of 421 the league pressured the Spartans into acknowledging its equal status in the alliance and, by the end of the war, it had expanded and consolidated much of its territory. But, by the end of the Corinthian war, this power and prestige had been utterly removed from Thebes while the city’s resources were spent. Conversely, Spartan influence throughout mainland Greece was about to reach its zenith. Nothing further is known about Epameinondas as a νεανίας, but he may have been old enough to have fought at the battles of Haliartus, Nemea and Coronea, along with many other skirmishes throughout the war. This experience would be unsurprising given the manifest influence these battles had on the tactics he would later employ. However, we have no reason to necessarily think that he was wholly committed to an anti-Spartan agenda. It is plausible that his father, Polymnis was a member of Leontiades faction during the Peloponnesian war and may have been opposed to war against Sparta. On the other hand, Epameinondas surely abhorred the arrogance of the Spartans and he would have been incensed by the massacre at Lecheum. We may then conclude that, though Epameinondas may have devoted much of his early adulthood to the study of philosophy, as a citizen and hoplite, the loss of the power and security of the league would surely have distressed him greatly. He was therefore, as with many Thebans and Boeotians, understandably sour towards the Spartans. But, from the Peace of Antalcidas, it would be five more years before he was compelled to act.

\textsuperscript{283} On these events see below, 66-69.
The Siege of Mantinea 386-385 B.C.

The earliest association Epameinondas has with a historical event is the alleged battle in which he saved Pelopidas’ life. The story is told in the most detail by Plutarch: he states that it occurred at Mantinea and a Theban contingent was fighting against the Arcadians for the Spartans under Agesipolis. Accordingly, Pelopidas had collapsed, owing to his wounds, and Epameinondas bravely fought off countless foes until Agesipolis came to the rescue. This event apparently began the lifelong friendship between the two Theban noblemen (Plut. Pel. 4. 4-5). If true, it was clearly an incredibly significant incident as their political partnership was integral to the achievement of Theban hegemonic success. However, several of the details are probably spurious; indeed, so much that Buckler has concluded that the entire event was essentially fictional.²⁸⁴ Of course the event may very well be apocryphal, but rather than being dismissed, a reassessment of the evidence is perhaps in order.

There is only one known military escapade that occurred at Mantinea during this period. According to both Diodorus and Xenophon, in 386, the Spartans sent a force to Mantinea in order to force them to separate into their five original villages. This resulted in a siege that only ended when the Spartans either damned the river that ran through the city or, according to Diodorus, diverted a river into the city. This caused an overflow of water that began to crumble the foundations of the walls (Xen. Hell. 5. 2. 1-7; Diod. 15. 5. 1-5, 12. 1-2). Isocrates also confirms the siege’s occurrence on more than one occasion (Isoc. 4. 126; 8. 100). If this is the battle Plutarch is referring to then Epameinondas would have been between 26 and 33, which is certainly a plausible age for him to be on such a campaign. On top of this, Agesipolis was indeed the general in command of the expedition. Thus, on the surface the evidence appears to be neatly reconcilable. But the question remains: why were the Thebans fighting alongside the Spartans? The answer to this seems to be given by Isocrates who refers to a Spartan-Theban alliance that existed after the Peace of Antalcidas in 387/6 (Isoc. 14. 27). If we can believe Isocrates, then it is easy enough to believe that a Theban contingent would have been sent to Mantinea to support the siege.

²⁸⁴ Buckler (1980b), 179-185.
Unfortunately, it gets far more complicated at this point because the presence of an alliance between the two city-states poses several problems. Buckler’s argument begins by asserting the unreliability of any statement that is made by Isocrates: he demonstrates that any historical information given by Isocrates, especially in the *Plataicus*, must be viewed with suspicion. Following this, he proceeds to provide the most convincing part of his argument, which is grounded on the fact that Xenophon makes no mention of the alleged alliance. If such an alliance existed, the Thebans would have been compelled to join the Spartans, not only on their expedition against Mantinea, but also on their campaigns against Phlius and Olynthus. There was certainly no Theban involvement at Phlius and, according to Xenophon, the Thebans were negotiating an alliance with the Olynthians (*Xen. Hell. 5. 2. 15, 34; Hell. Oxy. 13*). At the time, the Theban polemarchs even decreed that no arms would be taken up against the Olynthians (*Xen. Hell. 5. 2. 27*). Then the Spartans did attack Olynthus in 382 (*Xen. Hell. 5. 2. 20*): in consequence, the Thebans’ actions could certainly have been deemed as treasonous by the presence of an oath of alliance. As a result, the Spartans would have had sufficient justification to subdue the city of Thebes on their way to Olynthus. Being pro-Spartan, Xenophon would surely have jumped on the chance to justify their actions; however, he admits that these actions were dishonourable and instrumental in bringing about their own downfall (*Xen. Hell. 6. 3. 11*). Even later writers could see no justification, thus reproaching the Spartans. If this is the verdict of ancient historians both contemporary and later, we may well conclude that Isocrates’ assertion is entirely false.

If we agree that Buckler has convincingly put to rest any notion that an alliance existed between Sparta and Thebes during the years 386-382, does that altogether put to rest the possibility that a small contingent of Thebans were sent to assist the Spartans at Mantinea as Plutarch claims? There are two reasons to doubt Plutarch’s story. The main reason is that both Xenophon and Diodorus’ accounts of the campaign refer only to a siege and not to a pitched battle, which appears to be the implication of Plutarch’s account. Secondly, as Stern

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285 See Baynes (1955), 144-167, for an assessment of Isocrates’ contradictions and distortions of historical facts.
286 Grote (1872), 31-32 n. 4, also rejects Isocrates on these grounds but offers no further argument, cf. Stern (1884), 16-44, 64 n. 2.
287 Diod. 15. 20. 2; Polyb. 4. 27. 4; Plut. *Ages*. 23. 6; Arist. *Panath*. 172.
288 For the full argument see Buckler (1980b), 179-185.
has pointed out, the episode bears much similarity to Plutarch’s *Alcibiades* in which Socrates fended off many foes in defence of the wounded Alcibiades (Plut. *Alc.* 7. 3). Thus, Buckler attributes the story to a parallel that Plutarch was making between the relationships of Socrates-Alcibiades and Epameinondas-Pelopidas. To my mind, this part of the argument is far from compelling.

Firstly, the similarity between two separate stories should not be taken as conclusive evidence that one spawned the other when there is very little else to indicate this. Secondly, the campaign at Mantinea clearly lasted many months: from the summer of 386 to the winter of 385 (Diod. 15. 12. 1). Though a large-scale battle is not likely to have occurred, the accounts are very brief and may not offer us all of the information pertaining to the siege. During this time, it is certainly possible that small-scale hoplite engagements occurred: Epameinondas and Pelopidas could have been ambushed by a picked unit (perhaps just a few hundred men) of Mantineans who had sneaked out of the city to attack the Spartan lines, perhaps by night. The attack caught them off guard and fierce fighting took place until, having been roused, Agesipolis with his vanguard came along to drive them back. This reconstruction may seem fanciful, but it is meant to illustrate how the facts of an event can be altered and added to by the passage of time and knowledge.

One more reason that Buckler doubts Plutarch’s account is that it is the only evidence we have of this heroic story. However, that is not entirely true. Pausanias also briefly remarks on the incident (Paus. 9. 13. 1), though Buckler dismisses it as merely being obtained from Plutarch’s non-extant *Epameinondas*. But, as has been shown above, it is far from certain whether this is the case. In fact, it is equally likely to have come from an entirely independent source, though perhaps following the same tradition. What this may imply is that the story is based on a longstanding tradition that was probably filtered through various ancient writers throughout the centuries. If this is the case, we can easily expect that

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289 Stern (1884), 36.
290 Buckler (1980b), 185, considers the ultimate source to have come from Plato's *Symposium* 220e-221b.
291 Also in agreement with this view is Buck (1994), 63.
293 Buckler (1980b), 184-185 n. 25.
294 See above, 46.
295 Westlake (1939), 13, suggests a peripatetic source.
the details of the story would have become heavily distorted over time: details such as the nature of the battle and whether or not the Thebans were there as allies with the Spartans or simply doing it as a favour. Perhaps it bears similarities with the *Alcibiades* story only because of the tendency of the Greeks to mythologize the glorious deeds of past historical figures and the truth of it is, simply the bare facts, that Epameinondas and Pelopidas became friends on the campaign and fought together.

The plausibility, however, of such an expedition still weighs heavily on whether or not it was likely, even possible, that the Thebans might have sent a contingent to aid the Spartans in their siege. Until Buckler’s article, scholarship largely accepted the presence of a Theban contingent at Mantinea.

However, very few have made any real attempt to argue the case fully. The most notable exception to this is in an article by Hack, who attempted to reconstruct the relationship of Thebes with Sparta during the period between the Peace of Antalcidas and Phoebidas’ coup of the Cadmea (386-382). His arguments are accepting of Isocrates’ Spartan-Theban alliance, though he provides some justification for this, which may help to illuminate my arguments.

In order to understand the political situation in Thebes at this time, it is necessary to look nearly 20 years earlier. Having been allied to the Spartans during the Peloponnesian War (Thuc. 2. 9. 2), the Thebans’ policy toward the Spartans began to change. During the Decelean War (413-404) the Theban government was led by a faction favouring an alliance with Sparta: this was headed by Leontiades (*Hell. Oxy.* 12. 3-5). However, after the defeat of Athens in 404, the Spartans denied the Thebans’ request to have Athens destroyed. Then to add insult to injury they also refused their demand to receive a share of the spoils of the war (Plut. *Lys.* 27.2; Just. 5. 10. 12). As a result, the pro-Spartan faction quickly began to lose support. In 404/3 the Thebans aided Athenian exiles against the orders of the Spartans (*Xen. Hell.* 2. 4. 1; Diod. 14. 6. 3). Then around 400 they refused to join Sparta in their second campaign against Elis (*Xen. Hell.* 3. 2. 25). These insults culminated in 396 by the Thebans’

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296 See Hack (1978), 217 n. 21; Buckler (1980b), 179, for bibliographies on the various scholarship. Buck (1994), 63, must be included as a more recent addition.
297 Debate on this area is vast and varied with the major authorities including: Bruce (1960), 75-86; Perlman (1964), 64-81; Andrews (1971), 217-226; Cook (1988), 57-86; Lendon (1989), 300-313; Buck (1994), 27-41.
298 *Xen. Hell.* 2. 2. 19-20; Polyæn. 1. 45. 5; Isoc. 14. 31; Plut. *Lys.* 15. 2; Just. 5. 8. 1.
refusal to allow Agesilaus to sacrifice in Aulis before his Persian expedition. Such incidents all indicate the growth of the anti-Spartan faction, led by Ismenias. Though exactly when he was elected as boeotarch is a matter for debate, his rise to power can be seen as a crucial catalyst for the events leading to the Corinthian War.

During the war itself, the Theban government does not appear to have been entirely uniform. At around 392/1, the Thebans were apparently ready to accept peace terms despite the loss of Orchomenus from the Boeotian League (Andoc. 3. 13, 20). Buck suggests that this implies that a strengthening of the position of Leontiades was in effect: the expense of the war surely would have served to erode the support of Ismenias. But it is clear that he was far from beaten at this stage, since the terms of the peace failed to be agreed upon by all parties. We can then suggest that Ismenias generally maintained his authority up until the Peace of Antalcidas in 387/6, the terms of which, served to sever his support.

According to the peace terms, all Greek cities would be given autonomy with the exception of the Ionian Greeks and Cyprus, which would belong to Persia, while the islands of Lemnos, Imbros, and Scyros would remain under Athenian dominion. However, the Thebans, presumably at the behest of Ismenias’ faction, demanded that they sign the peace on behalf of all Boeotia. Agesilaus would not allow this and, when the Thebans refused to sign, the Spartans threatened them with war. As a result, with no allies left willing to fight with them, the Thebans had no choice but to accept the terms of the armistice (Xen. Hell. 5. 1. 31-34). In one move the Boeotian League had been terminated and the Spartans regained their overall superiority over the rest of the Greek city-states. Hack points out that, during the Corinthian War, the Boeotians failed to attain peace on two separate occasions: the first, as mentioned above would have allowed them to retain the league with only the loss of

299 Xen. Hell. 3. 4. 3-4; Plut. Lys. 27. 1; Ages. 15. 2-6.
301 See Lendon (1989), 300, for a list of some of the scholarship on the various causes of the war.
302 See Ryder (1965), 31-33; Smith (1954), 277-278; DeVoto (1986), 191-201, for the nature of this proposed treaty settlement.
305 Hack (1978), 214.
Orchomenus; the second was when Theban envoys at Sparta in 390, who were apparently sent to pursue peace, seemed to change their minds at the last minute (Xen. Hell. 4. 5. 6-9; Plut. Ages. 22. 1-3).\textsuperscript{306} Whatever the reasons, by 386 the Thebans had to admit defeat. The trust that the people of Thebes had placed in Ismenias’ faction would have been heavily damaged by the results of the peace. Having realized the importance of keeping on Sparta’s good side, support for the faction of Leontiades may have undergone a resurgence.

As has been shown, the political situation in Thebes during this period had the tendency to sway back and forth between a pro and anti-Spartan policy. The situation following the Peace of Antalcidas seems to suggest that Leontiades had regained his leading position. Exactly when he may have returned to power is difficult to determine.\textsuperscript{307} Cartledge has noted that the negotiations with Olynthus in 383 indicate Ismenias’ authority at the time, which implies that his support was growing at that point.\textsuperscript{308} The only remaining evidence we have for Thebes’ political situation before the Spartan coup d’etat is found in the Hellenica. Xenophon tells us that, by 382, both Ismenias and Leontiades were polemarchs and were at variance (στασιζόντων) with one another (Xen. Hell. 5. 2. 25). This indicates that there was a great deal of political turmoil at the time: one way or another, both parties obviously had a fair amount of support. Sparta’s harsh treatment of Mantinea and Phlius and the establishment of pro-Spartan governments in Boeotia would surely have increased the disdain towards them, slowly resulting in Ismenias’ return to prominence by around 383. However, after the peace, because of the loss of the Boeotian League and the increased influence of Sparta, it seems most likely that Leontiades’ faction was the dominant force managing the government’s foreign policies between 386 and 383. If this assertion is correct, then, during these three years it must be admitted that Thebes was largely controlled by a pro-Spartan faction.

\textsuperscript{306} This is perhaps because of the news of the Spartan defeat by Iphicrates or because Agesilaus insulted the Theban ambassadors by making them wait. However, Buck (1994), 55-56, does not think the suggestion for peace was one officially sanctioned by the Boeotian government.\textsuperscript{307} Buck (1994), 63-64, thinks that Ismenias would have been re-elected polemarchos by 383, though makes no suggestion about Leontiades; Cloché (1952), 112, agrees that Ismenias’ faction might have fallen from power between 386 and 382, emphasizing that 386 is preferable.\textsuperscript{308} Cartledge (1987), 296.
Because of these factors we can now assert that Thebes was ‘friendly’ to Sparta during 386 to 385; as a result, Leontiades would certainly have wanted to make amends with Sparta after a lengthy period of enmity between the two city-states. Therefore, he may very well have deemed it worthwhile to send a Theban contingent to support the Spartans for their siege of Mantinea. An oath of alliance was not likely to have existed in light of the poor reputation the Spartans received for taking the Cadmea at Thebes, an act that would otherwise have been justified. However, this does not conclusively refute the presence of the Theban contingent. It is easy to imagine that Isocrates would have exaggerated this ‘friendship’ by calling it an ‘alliance’ when the actual situation concerning Thebes’ foreign policy was clearly far more complicated and certainly not clean-cut enough to call it an alliance. There is, then, far from enough evidence to refute the possibility that Epameinondas and Pelopidas fought together at the siege of Mantinea. There is, in fact, enough evidence to conclude that it is a plausible story and, despite distortion, something to that effect may very well have occurred.

*The Tyranny of Leontiades and the Theban Revolt 382-379 B.C.*

In 382, on his way to Olynthus, the Spartan general Phoebidas conspired with Leontiades to overthrow the city of Thebes. This dramatic event resulted in the exile of the anti-Spartan faction and the subsequent trial and execution of Ismenias. A total of 300 exiles sought refuge at Athens, included among these was Pelopidas, who must have been a great supporter of the anti-Spartan faction by this stage: enough at least to be considered worthy of exile. On the other hand, Epameinondas had little or nothing to do with the exile and remained safely within his home while this incredible political upheaval was occurring. Three years later, the exiles would return and enact a very dramatic *coup d’etat*, which resulted in the disestablishment of the pro-Spartan faction, the establishment of a less autocratic, anti-Spartan state and the removal of any and all Spartan influence on the internal and external affairs of the Theban government. Epameinondas’ role amidst all these events may well have been minimal, but his prominence and influence as an aristocratic citizen is fairly evident. Thus, a discussion of his activities during this period is certainly called for: most especially worthwhile is a consideration of his political stance before and after the events at hand.
Early in 382, the Spartans sent Eudamidas with a force of 2,000 hoplites, responding to a plea from Acanthus and Apollonia, to begin subduing the newly formed Chalcidian League, which was fronted by Olynthus. However, this was merely an advance party: another 8,000 men under Phoebidas, brother of Eudamidas, gathered together with the alleged intention of joining forces with the advance. Despite this, Phoebidas did anything but march straight to Chalcidice. Instead he conveniently arrived at Thebes during the festival of the Thesmophoria in which the Cadmea would have been occupied solely by women. Leontiades then treated with Phoebidas, discussing how best their plan should unfold. The Spartan commander consequently seized the opportunity and occupied the Cadmea with his soldiers. This allowed Leontiades to take charge of the council and place Ismenias under arrest, subsequently having him executed. In a single day, the city of Thebes had been subjugated to the authority of Sparta and 300 members of the anti-Spartan faction were ousted from the city as exiles. Fortunately, all of these, including Pelopidas, found protection at Athens: there they would remain for the next three years.

What is particularly interesting about this incident is that Epameinondas apparently remained unmolested in Thebes. Plutarch ascribes this to his philosophical tendencies, i.e. that he was considered harmless due to the fact that he spent all his time in thought rather than in action (Plut. Pel. 5. 3). Little or no discussion has been made about the significance of this statement. In Swoboda’s assessment of the sources of Epameinondas before 371, he appears to dismiss it, along with other examples, as part of a dubious reconstruction of his life that occurred many years after his death. Swoboda’s allusion to the reference in Plutarch is, however, quite minimal, and does not account for its presence by any means.

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309 For the Chalcidian League and its subsequent subjugation by Sparta see Cartledge (1987), 266-273; Buckler (2003), 198-212.
310 On the Thesmophoria see Nilsson (1906), 313-328; Parker (2005), 270-283.
311 Xen. 5. 2. 25-35; Diod. 15. 20. 1-3; Plut. Pel. 5. 2-6. 1; Ages. 23. 3-24. 1; De Gen. Soc. 1/575f-576a; Nep. Pel. 1. 2-3. Because of the rather serious discrepancies in the sources there are various interpretations of the instigators of the plot, the motives and the manner in which the event unfolded, see Grote (1872), 55-61; Beloch (1922), 3. 1. 104; Laistner (1936), 190; Cloché (1952), 113; Hammond (1959), 469-470; Rice (1974), 179-182; Rice (1975), 222-227; Hack (1978), 222-227; Cartledge (1989), 296-297; Buck (1994), 64-69; Buckler (2008), 73-76; Roisman (2017), 277-281.
312 Swoboda (1900), 2679.
It is, of course, understandable that very little thought has been afforded to the reference. The statement is very brief and implies that Epameinondas had nothing to do with the events at hand, but it is perfectly believable, given the lack of evidence of any political activities, that he had, up to this point, lived the life of a philosopher and not a statesman. Neither Xenophon or Diodorus mention the incident; however, the former was never likely to mention it anyway, and the relative insignificance of the reference easily explains why these historians did not see fit to include it. There is no way of ascertaining where Plutarch obtained the information; one would guess from some sort of biographical treatise or maybe even the Boeotian historians Anaxis and Dionysodorus,313 who may have had access to information that Ephorus or Callisthenes did not. However, such speculation is futile and, as far as can be deduced, there is no particular reason to doubt the authenticity of Plutarch’s statement.

Accepting this, we can then make some speculations, which may illuminate Epameinondas’ position during the course of these events. The most obvious and, perhaps, important implication is that Epameinondas appears not to have been politically active at this point in time. If he had been actively supporting Ismenias’ anti-Spartan faction surely he would have been forced into exile along with the rest of them. Of course, there were others sympathetic to Ismenias who remained in Thebes, otherwise the Theban coup of 379 would not have been possible. But as we can see, he did not go out of his way to support the anti-Spartan faction. Because it is also clear that he would not have had much to do with the pro-Spartan faction, it seems that, outwardly, he displayed more of a neutral political position. He may well have been sympathetic to the causes of Ismenias and Pelopidas, but there is no evidence of that until after Phoebidas’ coup. Considering the nature of Theban politics over the previous two decades, if he had indeed been sympathetic to the anti-Spartans, why had he not taken a more active role by this stage as Pelopidas had clearly done? The answer to this question may become clear when considering his actions during and after the Spartan occupation.

Very little evidence exists for the period between Phoebidas’ coup and the liberation of Thebes (382-379/8) save for a few passing remarks. Leontiades and his followers, Archias

313 See above, 32-33.
and Philippus, are said to have ruled the city as τύραννοι (Xen. Hell. 5. 4. 1-2; Plut. Ages. 24. 1), though whether or not the constitution underwent any formal changes is a matter of debate.\textsuperscript{314} The inhabitants of the city were kept in line by the presence of a Spartan garrison within the Cadmea. These are said to have been 1,500\textsuperscript{315} in number and were commanded by three Spartan harmosts: Lysanoridas, Herippidas, and Arcissus.\textsuperscript{316} The lack of freedom in Thebes during this period would have been sorely felt. Many of those who had once been partial to an alliance with Sparta would now have estranged themselves from such feelings. Presumably a large portion of the pro-Spartan sympathizers believed that it was necessary to ally themselves to the Peloponnesian League in order to guarantee the safety of the city-state and its people. But few would have expected such a dishonourable act, even amongst the anti-Spartans who were caught completely off-guard. Though Agesilaus and the rest of the Spartan assembly may have decided that Phoebidas’ actions were ostensibly beneficent, in fact, the result was that they ostracized themselves from a city that, until recently, had significant support for them. The consequence of Phoebidas’ coup and Leontiades’ tyranny was clearly an overwhelming surge of hatred for the Spartans within Thebes.

If we can now imagine the general feeling in Thebes during the Spartan occupation, we can then come to our next piece of evidence. Apparently, Epameinondas would often encourage his Theban comrades to wrestle at the gymnasium with the Spartan soldiers who were present in the city. If they succeeded in beating their opponents and were elated by their victory, he would tell them they ought, rather, to feel ashamed because of their failure to prevent the Spartans from enslaving them (Plut. Pel. 7. 3). This practice is also reiterated by Polyaenus who says that, as a result, the Thebans developed contempt for the Spartan

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\item\textsuperscript{314} Buckler (2008), 88-89, argues that the constitution did not change; rather, the polemarchs were afforded more power. Buck (1994), 70 n. 37, however, does not think this is possible owing to Plutarch and Xenophon’s references to the tyranny. See also Grote (1875), 76-78, for comparisons with the 30 tyrants at Athens in 404. Beck and Ganter (2015), 147, have noted that the so-called tyranny need not be taken literally, but it does suggest that Thebes had become more rigidly oligarchic, based on “marginal popular consent”.
\item\textsuperscript{315} Buck (1994), 70, does not agree with this number as Xenophon says the garrison was few (ὀλίγοι) in number (Xen. Hell. 5. 4. 11); however, they are referred to as ‘few’ in the face of the oncoming Theban populace, which by this stage, may have numbered thousands. Xenophon may very well have meant ‘few’ by comparison.
\item\textsuperscript{316} Diod. 15. 25. 2; Plut. Pel. 12. 3, 13. 2; De Gen. Soc. 34/598f. See Parke (1927), 159-165, for an attempt to account for each of the harmosts. Again, Buck (1994), 70, argues against three harmosts as Xenophon only mentions one (Xen. Hell. 5. 4. 10, 13), but this does not account for the presence of the three in both Plutarch and Diodorus.
\end{footnotes}
soldiers, which emboldened their confidence to face them on the battlefield (Polyaen. 2. 3. 6). Swoboda is dubious about these also, though again, little or no discussion has been afforded to them. Not long after the liberation, the Thebans were renowned for their physical strength (Diod. 15. 39. 1; Xen. Hell. 6. 5. 22-24). This may, in part, have been greatly influenced by Epameinondas’ emphasis on physical prowess, which he, along with Pelopidas, apparently excelled in. It was perhaps such instances, at Epameinondas’ urging, that helped to encourage the growth in fitness of the young Theban men who would be part of the soon-to-be highly successful Theban military. The situation in which he encouraged this boon in physical achievement over a three year period is then quite plausible. This implies that Epameinondas, in reaction to the illegal annexation of his city, had begun to take an active role in preparing his brethren for future encounters of hostility as well as boosting their pride after it would have been brought so low.

Following a period of Spartan domination in Thebes and the rest of Boeotia, the exiles that had been brooding in Athens decided the time was ripe to risk all, preferring death than to suffer Leontiades’ tyranny of their home any longer. Sometime during the winter of 379/8, a small group of exiles, led by Melon and Pelopidas, secretly entered Thebes where they rallied at the house of Charon, who was a notable citizen and supporter of the anti-Spartan faction. The conspirators, under cover of night and bad weather, split off into two groups: one group dressed as women in order to enter undetected into a party, where Archias and Philippus were getting intoxicated; the second group infiltrated the homes of Leontiades and Hypates. In each case the exiles successfully dispatched their enemies. Following this, they freed the political prisoners from their cells and then began attempting to rally the general populace to arms in the agora. By the morning they began to besiege the Cadmea and eventually forced the Spartan harmosts to surrender under truce, with some probable help from Athens, thus sending them home without due slaughter.

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317 Swoboda (1900), 2697.
318 Nep. Epam. 2. 4; Plut. Pel. 4. 1; Reg. Apoph. 71. 3/192c-d.
319 Xen. 5. 4. 1-12; Diod. 15. 25-27; Plut. Pel. 5-13; De Gen. Soc. 2/576b-34/598f; Ages. 23. 3-24. 1; Nep. Pel. 1. 2-4. 2; Epam. 10. 3.
These are essentially the bare facts, which are attested by the sources; however, in many places, especially between Diodorus and Xenophon, the sources are irreconcilable. Nevertheless, what is not widely discussed is Epameinondas’ apparently minimal role in this event. More than once by both Plutarch and Nepos, Epameinondas is alleged to have refused to be involved in the conspiracy against his countrymen, but then proceeded to assist in the assault on the Cadmea with gusto. Apparently, while the conspirators were dispatching their enemies and freeing the prisoners, Epameinondas, along with Gorgidas, had been rallying other local Thebans, old and young. After securing arms, they gathered in the agora before making their attack on the Cadmea. Though the bulk of the populace had not assembled until dawn, it seems that Epameinondas had rallied a force of soldiers to use against the Spartans. Then, sometime afterwards, the remaining exiles returned and it was Epameinondas who greeted them and brought them with Pelopidas and Melon before the Theban assembly.

His significance during the event is generally glossed over or ignored by scholars; presumably for some, he is worth mentioning only because of his later importance. Again, Swoboda wishes to dismiss Plutarch’s testimony particularly because of the theatrical nature and unreliability of the De Genio Socratis. However, this assertion does not account for the multiple reports of Epameinondas’ activity during the coup by both Plutarch and Nepos. The fact that his role, despite being the main character, as portrayed in the De Genio Socratis, has not been blown out of proportion with the account in the Pelopidas, may well indicate

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320 The debate surrounding the Theban coup is diverse and no uniform agreement has been reached by scholars. There has been a tendency to accept Xenophon’s account and to disregard the testimony of Diodorus, see Grote (1872), 78-90; Laistner (1936), 192; Rice (1975), 96-103; Howan (1987), 385-406; Worthington (1992), 193-195; Buck (1994), 72-78. Despite this, there have been some significant attempts to reconcile the two sources: Cawkell (1973), 56-60; Hamilton (1991), 152-174. Kallet-Marx (1985), 140-147, generally leans towards Xenophon but does not believe there is enough evidence to conclude that Athens had not made an official sanction to support Thebes as attested by Xenophon (Xen. Hell. 5. 4. 19), whereas Diodorus specifically states that the Athenian assembly voted for supporting Thebes (Diod. 15. 26. 1). Note that Dinarchus also confirms the vote by the assembly (Din. 1. 39), though cf. Howan (1987), 377-378, 401-406. More recently Stylianou (1998), 230-241; Parker (2007), 14-33; Roisman (2017), 277-281, have also given more weight to Diodorus’ account.
322 Plut. Pel. 12. 2-4; De Gen. Soc. 25/594a-c, 34/598c-f; Nep. Epam. 10. 3.
323 Grote (1972), 84; Hammond (1959), 482; Hamilton (1991), 156, all accept Epameinondas’ presence but make no attempt to account for his role or its significance.
324 Swoboda (1900), 2679.
Plutarch’s attempt to keep the events, generally, historically accurate. Of course, the essay should only be interpreted as a dramatic philosophic exercise; however, when stripped down to the bare facts, Epameinondas’ role is essentially the same in both accounts. Neither does Nepos portray his involvement in the liberation any differently: they are in fact, entirely reconcilable. Does this imply a common source between the two? This cannot be answered, but it is certainly possible to have belonged to a longstanding tradition concerning the liberation of Thebes and is not likely to be entirely apocryphal.

Upon accepting some sort of historical basis, there is a certain degree of interpretation possible here. Epameinondas refused to take part in the bloodshed because of his philosophy, but he clearly still had an active role in the uprising. Throughout the Spartan occupation he had been trying to boost the pride and strength of the young generation of Theban men: during the liberation he led, perhaps these very men, to engage the Spartan regiment. He also appears to have been instrumental in organizing the rally in the town square in which the exiles gathered, the people gathered and a general assembly was held. Plutarch reports that Epameinondas and Gorgidas, after meeting with Pelopidas and Melon, brought them to the Theban assembly (Plut. Pel. 12. 4). Though he refused to be involved in the slaughter of Theban citizens, this level of involvement seems considerable for someone whose role in the liberation is generally glossed over. Georgiadou has even suggested that Epameinondas and Gorgidas were acting as unofficial boeotarchs since they urged the assembly to welcome the liberators as heroes. This suggestion may be somewhat presumptuous concerning the present role of Epameinondas and Gorgidas; however, it is clear that their political activities were of a relative significance. Both men would surely have required something of a prominent standing in order to have the gall required to address the assembly. Gorgidas is known to have been a hipparch before the Spartan occupation (Plut. De Gen. Soc. 5/578c), but undoubtedly, they were relying on one another’s prominence to support their own convictions.

325 Riley (1977), 269-270. This also had the effect of allowing his character, in the essay, to bridge the gap between philosopher and active citizen.
After the rallying of the assembly, the following people were elected as boeotarchs: Pelopidas, Melon and Charon (Plut. *Pel.* 13. 1).\(^{327}\) It is clear that this was a direct result of the general assembly, which was called together and even addressed by Epameinondas and Gorgidas. Buckler asserts that they “sponsored” the elections, which were also the first elections of a newly revamped Theban city-state:\(^{328}\) he suggests that this was part of their plans for the liberation.\(^{329}\) If this was indeed all part of the liberators’ plans, then, despite Epameinondas’ scruples, he appears to have had an important and very involved position. The emphasis is that it was in the interest of the new government to have one or two men who could not be accused of killing native Thebans, thus only a portion of the faction could be charged with such if it ever arose (Plut. *De Gen. Soc.* 25/594b-c; Nep. *Epam.* 10. 3).\(^{330}\) He then acted as one of the commanders in the siege of the Cadmea (Plut. *De Gen. Soc.* 34/598c-f). It is clear from this that his role during the liberation of Thebes is a testament to the intricate organization involved in its conception and execution. Epameinondas’ actions do not appear to have been random and certainly fit within the realms of plausibility whether or not the testimonies of Plutarch and Nepos can be believed. Though he had not, by this point, reached the highest echelons of government, he must have been a well-respected and well-trusted citizen.

\(^{327}\) Despite Plutarch’s clear use of the word “βοιωτάρχης”, scholarship is divided on whether the office of boeotarch had been re-instated to replace the polemarch. Notable arguments against Plutarch include: Beloch (1922), 145 n. 2; Cawkwell (1972), 275-276. However, Buckler (2008), 87-98, provides a convincing argument in favour of the evidence, which is agreed upon by Buck (1994), 79 n. 78, and Georgiadou (1997), 127. Gorgidas is also known to have been a boeotarch later in the year (Plut. *Pel.* 14. 1), though there is no evidence to suggest that he was voted into office as early as the liberation. He may very well have been elected at a later date, after the re-establishment of the boeotarchy.

\(^{328}\) It is most often thought that, after the liberation, Thebes and the Boeotian federal state adopted a democratic government possibly based, to some extent, on the Athenian model, e.g. Busolt (1926), 1424-1425, 1428; Buckler (1980a), 15-45; Buck (1994), 78-80, 115-122; Beck (2000), 332-339; Beck and Ganter (2015), 148-150. The main evidence for this is that contemporary Boeotian inscriptions refer to the members of the federal council as *damoi* (e.g. *IG* VII 2407) and our sources indicate the use of a federal assembly (Diod. 15. 50. 4, 70. 2, 80. 2, 16. 25. 1, 85. 3, 17. 9. 1; Xen. *Hell.* 7. 3. 5-12). However, Larsen (1967), 178, warned against using the word democracy when there is no explicit indication that the previous property qualification for enfranchisement had been altered, see also Walbank (1967), 111. More recently Rhodes (2010), 248-249; Rhodes (2016), 59-64, has further argued against the evidence for democracy, particularly noting that the use of an assembly or the word *damoi* in official documents are not unique to democracies and perfectly applicable to oligarchic poleis. It shall also be further argued throughout this thesis that Epameinondas and the Boeotian League did not make an exceptional habit of supporting democracies. Although the character of the new league may have appeared somewhat democratic, possibly influenced by the exiles’ stay at Athens and in contrast to the Spartan oligarchy, we cannot assume that a portion of the Boeotian population was suddenly awarded political rights without more explicit evidence.

\(^{329}\) Buckler (1980a), 40-41.

\(^{330}\) DeVoto (1989), 114.
While the evidence for Epameinondas during this period cannot be conclusively verified, it can neither be absolutely proven to be false. Admittedly, my arguments do tend to make the assumption that the testimonies of Plutarch are a plethora of factual information; however, if his testimonies cannot be refuted for legitimate reasons, then there is more reason to accept at least some semblance of truth within his statements than to deny even the possibility of their authenticity. After then considering the evidence, it would therefore seem incorrect to assert that Epameinondas was not politically active until 371. There is ample evidence to prove that he played a relatively prominent role, though he may very well have spent a great deal of his time before 379 in deep philosophical thought. It is clear that the Spartan occupation of 382 incensed him enough to begin taking an active interest in the future well being of his home and fellow citizens.

*War With Sparta 378-371 B.C.*

From the liberation of Thebes in 379/8 to the peace treaty before Leuctra in 371, there is almost no specific evidence relating to the activities of Epameinondas. However, there is certainly no reason to assume that he was inactive. The fact that he is barely mentioned may well indicate that his involvement was relatively minimal but because of his relationship with Pelopidas, who would retain some form of office until his death (Plut. *Pel.* 15. 3, 34. 5), the speculation can equally be made that he held some sort of middling political position until being made boeotarch in 371, perhaps earlier. There is also good reason to believe that he was likely to have fought as a regular hoplite during the ongoing struggle with Sparta. If indeed, he did play a notable role, surely Plutarch’s *Epameinondas* would have

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331 With the exception of Diod. 15. 38. 3. See below, 83.
332 A recent article on the so-called magistrate’s coins has concluded that Epameinondas may have had coins minted bearing his name around 378-377, which, if accepted, would infer that he held a significant political position, possibly even the eponymous archonship. See Schachter (2016b), 42-58, though a later dating for these coins is still possible, see below, 264-265. On the relative chronology of the magistrate coins see Hepworth (1998), 61-89.
333 If he was not elected to any military or political office during this period, he is likely to have been obligated to fight as a regular hoplite, just as he would later do in 368 (Nep. *Epam.* 7. 1). Cawkwell (1972), 257, agrees that prior military experience is probable but is suspicious of any political prominence due to the lack of evidence; however, his reasons for disputing the evidence, as we shall see, are not as strong as was thought.
given detail, which is not mentioned by any of the extant sources. The result of examining his role during this period is fraught with speculation, but accepting this, there is surely value in attempting to reconstruct his career during this time. Certainly, other scholars have made similar attempts; thus, it is worth examining their own speculations and historical plausibility.

Shortly after the exiles’ return to Thebes and the siege of the Cadmea, the Spartan king Cleombrotus was sent on an expedition to Thebes. He achieved very little militarily, but the display of power caused the Athenians to lose their nerve in the face of a dangerous foe: hoping to prevent Spartan reprisals, the Athenians charged the generals who had aided the Thebans during their uprising. While in Boeotia, Cleombrotus also made the Spartan officer Sphodrias the harmost of a garrison at Thespiae (Xen. Hell. 5. 4. 14-19). Some weeks after this, Sphodrias took a large force into Attica under the cover of night with the alleged intention of taking the Piraeus. If this was his intention, he failed miserably, and his mistake would bring Athens into the war alongside Thebes. Sphodrias’ reasons for attempting such a daring feat have been the subject of a large amount of scholarly debate for over 200 years, which has still yet to find any uniform agreement. There are, it seems, three possibilities: one, Diodorus states that, although it was without the ephors’ consent, Cleombrotus explicitly gave the orders (Diod. 15. 29. 5-7); two, Xenophon claims that he was incited by bribery from the Thebans (Xen. Hell. 5. 4. 20), who Plutarch names as Pelopidas and Gorgidas (Plut. Pel. 14. 1-3) or Pelopidas and Melon (Plut. Ages. 24. 3-6); three, that he acted on his own initiative. In light of more recent scholarship the third motive is generally discounted as irrelevant or secondary, therefore scholars have tended to support either the Xenophon-Plutarch account or Diodorus’ account. Certainly the case can be made to support either, but, for the sake of argument, we will hypothetically accept the former.

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334 Between about April and May, see Burnett (1962), 2; Cawkwell (1973), 55.
335 This idea, as asserted by Grote (1872), 93-95, is based on the argument that the explanations in both Xenophon and Diodorus are unlikely. Pontow (1870), 51, is less certain about the sources’ unreliability though, nevertheless, agrees that a great deal of personal ambition was involved.
336 Curtius (1872), 360; Cargill (1981), 59; Hamilton (1991), 167-174; Buck (1994), 91-93. Kallet-Marx (1985), 149-151, believes it is fruitless to choose one account over the other because both bear morsels of plausibility.
337 Beloch (1922), 147 n. 1; MacDonald (1972), 38-44; Cawkwell (1973), 55-56; Rice (1975), 108-109; Stylianou (1998), 262-263; Parker (2007), 30-31; Buckler (2008), 79-84; Roisman (2017), 283.
Having ‘accepted’ the Xenophon-Plutarch account, we are then asserting that Sphodrias was persuaded by words and money to attack the Piraeus. Allegedly, the boeotarchs Pelopidas and Gorgidas or Pelopidas and Melon (perhaps all three) sent men who pretended to be Spartan sympathizers and encouraged him to attack the Piraeus. It was long ago suggested by Meissner that Epameinondas was surely involved in masterminding this plot.338 This claim was later refuted by Swoboda because Plutarch fails to mention his name in relation to the event.339 Though Meissner’s speculation is based only on the confidence in Epameinondas’ brilliance that he had, it is interesting to note that Plutarch’s discrepancy in naming the boeotarchs involved has received minimal discussion. Georgiadou has suggested that it was either a mistake on Plutarch’s part or a “looseness of expression”; however, he also points out that Plutarch is not devoted to providing a detailed image of the contemporary political situation in Thebes.340 What this means is that Plutarch may very well have not been bothered to give credit where it was due at every stage in his narrative. In the Pelopidas, he naturally awards credit to the protagonist of the biography: he also includes Gorgidas, perhaps feeling the need to convey that the plot was jointly conceived. However, in the Agesilaus, he simply throws in the names of Pelopidas and Melon. If this was not a mistake, it is easy enough to conclude that, for both of his accounts, there could have plausibly been other conspirators involved: perhaps Charon, Phillidas or Epameinondas. Though one would expect that, since there are two surviving accounts by Plutarch, he would have mentioned Epameinondas had he been involved. However, if indeed the Thebans did incite Sphodrias,341 it is likely that Epameinondas was somehow involved, though perhaps only indirectly.

Following the Athenian reaction to Sphodrias’ acquittal and declaration of hostilities with Sparta, in the same year, Agesilaus was called forth to lead an army against Thebes. He brought a massive force of 18,000 troops along with 1,500 cavalry, which entered Boeotia via

338 Meissner (1798), 130-131.
339 Swoboda (1900), 2679.
341 As suggested by Hamilton (1991), 169, there may be some truth in both accounts. Though MacDonald (1972), 38 n. 1, states that Plutarch’s account is “derivative and adds nothing substantial”, the fact that Plutarch has extra details indicates that he got his information from more than just Xenophon, perhaps Callisthenes, see Buck (1994), 92. Therefore, as Hamilton suggests, Cleombrotus may well have given Sphodrias some form of instruction to thwart any Athenian anti-Spartan activity. Then the Theban leaders, believing that the Athenians would no longer help them, sent the alleged Spartan sympathizers to convince Sphodrias in his daring attempt: such a mission may have been enacted under some impression of authority from his king.
the route over Mt. Cithaeron. In support of the Thebans, the Athenians had sent 5,000 foot soldiers with 200 cavalry commanded by Chabrias. In preparation for the attack, the Thebans, probably with Athenian help, constructed a fortified stockade and trench, which likely ran from the hill of Cynoscephalae moving southeast, just north of the Asopos. It was apparently aligned 20 stadia from Thebes.\textsuperscript{342} Though Chabrias managed to repel a small-scale attack, Agesilaus breached the stockade by a surprise dawn attack and laid waste to much of the landscape. Fortunately for Thebes, he did not attempt a full-scale pitched battle and left having seized his spoils.\textsuperscript{343}

Though the use of defensive structures was nothing new, it was certainly novel to use stockades and trenches to defend an entire area of land.\textsuperscript{344} The sources do not specifically credit anyone for masterminding this innovation, though assertions and assumptions have been made. Both Pomtow and Curtius have suggested that Epameinondas was instrumental, but they provide no real argument for the case other than his self-evident genius.\textsuperscript{345} Thus Swoboda has discounted their assertions as vain attempts to give credit to the hero wherever possible.\textsuperscript{346} It is tempting to agree with them though: retrospectively it would make sense that the genius of Leuctra was already revolutionizing the science of war in these early days; however, there is no real reason to suggest that Epameinondas was in charge of military affairs as early as this. As we can also see, the only name mentioned on the Theban-Athenian side for this campaign is the experienced Athenian general Chabrias.\textsuperscript{347} Because of this, scholars have often simply assumed that Chabrias was the brains behind the scheme, though, generally without fully justifying their assertion.\textsuperscript{348} Cary, on the other hand, has noted that Chabrias had previously had experience in the use of field-fortifications while fighting in the Nile delta.\textsuperscript{349} Nevertheless, the evidence for this is not altogether explicit;\textsuperscript{350} therefore, while

\textsuperscript{342} See Munn (1987), 112-138, for an analysis of the topography of the stockade and its effectiveness. See also Stylianou (1998), 294-296.
\textsuperscript{343} Xen. \textit{Hell.} 5. 4. 35-41; \textit{Ages.} 2. 22; Diod. 15. 32. 1-6; Polyaen. 2. 1. 11, 25; Nep. \textit{Chab.} 1.
\textsuperscript{344} Anderson (1976), 132-136. Hanson (1998), 82-83, describes it as the first "agricultural field wall".
\textsuperscript{345} Pomtow (1870), 52; Curtius (1872), 363-364.
\textsuperscript{346} Swoboda (1900), 2679.
\textsuperscript{347} On Chabrias in general see Howan (1987). See also Pritchett (1972), 72-77, for a good overview of Chabrias' career.
\textsuperscript{348} Jones et al. (1957), 176; McCredie (1966), 96.
\textsuperscript{349} Cary (1927), 68. See also Munn (1987), 114 n. 28, who adds that the scale of the fortifications would have required the extra labour that the Athenian army offered.
Chabrias was certainly the most experienced general, he does not necessarily deserve sole credit for the fortifications. The idea may well have been conceived by Pelopidas or, perhaps more likely, Gorgidas, who stood as probably the most experienced Theban military commander by this stage. Despite this, Chabrias is certainly a more plausible candidate than Epameinondas.

After Agesilaus left Theban territory, he placed a garrison at Thespiae with Phoebidas as harmost before heading home. Phoebidas subsequently sent raids into Theban farmland and villages, which prompted the Thebans to make an assault with the bulk of their army on Thespiae, killing the harmost. In the following year (377), Agesilaus once more took to the field against the Thebans. Again, he managed to bypass the stockade and ravaged the land to the east of Thebes up to Tanagra. Having had their land ravaged for two years in a row, the Thebans were severely short on food. They sent out two triremes to Pagasae in an effort to start a trade route (Xen. Hell. 5. 4. 56-57; Front. Strat. 4. 7. 19).

In 376, the Spartans again sent an expedition against Thebes, this time led by Cleombrotus. Unfortunately for him the Boeotians and Athenians had already occupied Mt. Cithaeron by the time he got there and was unable to secure the mountain pass. As a result, he returned home after his defeat (Xen. Hell. 5. 4. 59). Later in the year, and in 375, the Athenians won two significant naval victories against the Spartans (Xen. Hell. 5. 4. 62; Diod. 15. 36. 5). This gave the Thebans free rein to march throughout Boeotia and subdue many of the neighbouring cities (Xen. Hell. 5. 4. 63-64). The new Boeotian League was then beginning to take shape. These included cities such as Chaeronea, Coronea, Copai,

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350 The argument for this, as given by Parke (1933), 60, is based on two place names in Egypt: Χαβρίου χάραξ (Strabo 16. 2. 43) or Chabriae castra (Plin. Nat. Hist. 5. 25) near Pelusium; and Χαβρίου κώμη (Strabo 17. 1. 22) near Mareotis. That Chabrias commanded the Egyptian forces against the Persians (c. 386-384) is well attested (Diod. 15. 29. 2-4; Nep. Chab. 3. 1). The fortifications that were constructed in Egypt are described in Diodorus’ brief account of the Persian attack on Egypt, led by Pharnabazus and Iphicrates in 373 (Diod. 15. 42. 1-4). However, Diodorus makes no connection between these fortifications and Chabrias’ campaign; therefore, it is impossible to confirm that these were his creation with certainty. The names in Pliny and Strabo could imply his creation, but they also may have been named posthumously out of respect for the late general.

351 Bauch (1834), 19, asserts Gorgidas was in command of the Theban force, though without evidence.

352 Xen. Hell. 5. 4. 41-46; Diod. 15. 33. 4-6; Plut. Pel. 15. 4; Polyæn. 2. 5. 2.

353 Xen. Hell. 5. 4. 47-55; Diod. 15. 34. 1-2; Polyæn. 2. 1. 12, 24; Front. Strat. 1. 4. 3.

354 On this event see Sprawski (1999), 64-67. This event also led to the capture by Thebes of Oreus/Histiaea, which may be the context of a recently discovered treaty of alliance between the two cities, making Thebes, hegemon, see Aravantinos and Papazarkadas (2012), 239-254.
Akraphnion, Lebadea, Haliartos and Tanagra (Xen. Hell. 6. 1. 1; Plut. Pel. 15. 4-5). This campaign also involved the small-scale but significant Battle of Tegyra in which Pelopidas led the Sacred Band to victory against a larger Spartan force (Diod. 15. 37. 2; Plut. Pel. 16.). Not long after, the Thebans sent a force into Phocis, which appealed to Sparta for help. The Spartans responded by sending a large force under Cleombrotus (Xen. Hell. 6. 1. 1), which arrived around late August. The Thebans withdrew to defend their passes. After an expensive campaign at sea, the Athenians began to get fed up and suspicious of the ever-growing Boeotian League; thus, they then decided to sue for peace with Sparta (Xen. Hell. 6. 2. 1).

Though it is useful to summarize these events, Epameinondas’ role within them cannot usefully be speculated upon in any detail. It is, however, surely likely that he was involved. If, indeed, as we shall see, he held the position of ambassador for the Boeotian League in the peace treaty of 375/4, he must have continually held significant political and perhaps military positions by this stage.

The scholarship surrounding the Peace of 375/4 is fraught with a wide array of different arguments, which have hoped to settle the issue. Unfortunately, every decade seems to bring an altered understanding for the instigation, result and date of the peace. This, as is often the case, is the result from the very different accounts given by our main sources. Xenophon states, as mentioned above, that the Athenians were exhausting their treasury to

356 On the Battle of Tegyra, see below, 115. On the Sacred Band see Leitao (2002), 143-169, who has questioned both its erotic nature and its role in historical events. While he may be correct for the former, his arguments for the latter are far from decisive. His main argument is that Callisthenes embellished the role of the Sacred Band, while Xenophon, Ephorus and Pausanias make no mention of it; particularly absent is Pelopidas and the Sacred Band’s role at the Battle of Leuctra. However, the fact that Ephorus omits Pelopidas’ role and credits Epameinondas with the success of victory is probably due to his propensity to glorify the latter. Though Leitao is correct that Xenophon’s account of military activities is generally accurate, he does not fully appreciate Xenophon’s tendency to omit Theban activities, see above, 16-18; nor does Hanson (1988), 190-207, whom Leitao cites, see below, 112-118.
357 For accounts of the various campaigns between 378-375 see DeVoto (1987), 75-82; Munn (1987), 106-138; Hamilton (1991), 174-190; Buck (1994), 95-100
358 Even Pomtow (1870), 52-55, refrains from such guessing despite giving him credit for the fortifications; though Curtius (1872), 372, has no problem attributing the growth of the Boeotian League to the policies of Epameinondas.
359 The date of the peace is less important for this discussion; however, I prefer the arguments of Buckler (1971), 353-361, esp. 353 (for bibliography), who places the peace around late spring or in the early summer of 375.
fund the naval campaign, which the Thebans failed to contribute anything to. As a result of this and their fear of the increase of Theban power, the Athenians sent ambassadors to Sparta in order to establish a peace treaty. Xenophon offers little in the way of the terms of the peace, with the exception that Timotheus being recalled back to Athens was high on the agenda (Xen. *Hell.* 6. 2. 1-2). Diodorus, on the other hand, reports, in much greater detail, that the peace was at the impetus of the Persian king, Artaxerxes. Accordingly, the great king, wishing to make war on the Egyptians with the help of Greek mercenaries decided to impose his influence by affecting a peace. A treaty was held and all of the Greek states involved agreed to the terms, which bore very similar resonances to the Peace of Antalcidas in 387/6. As a result, all foreign garrisons were disbanded and sent home. Unlike the Peace of the previous decade, both Sparta and Athens were judged worthy of the dual position of ἡγεμονίας. However, according to Diodorus, Epameinondas, who was acting as ambassador for the Boeotian League, demanded that the Thebans sign on behalf of Boeotia. He apparently clashed in τῷ κοινῷ συνεδρίῳ with the Athenian orator, Callistratus. Because of their refusal, the Thebans were excluded from the peace (Diod. 15. 38. 1-4).

Diodorus’ account has frequently been discounted for various reasons. The most commonly perceived error is his assertion that Thebes was excluded from the peace: there is plenty of evidence that suggests that Thebes retained its position as a member of the Athenian League after the peace, therefore Diodorus has been thought to have recorded inaccurate information ([Dem.] 49. 14, 21, 48-54; *IG* II² 1607. 49, 155). Isocrates also states in his *Plataicus* that the Thebans seized Plataea in a time of peace (εἰρήνης οὔσης), which has been argued to imply that the Thebes was a party to the recent treaty (Isoc. 14. 1, 5, 14). Because of this and similarities with the Peace of 371 (i.e. the exclusion of Thebes, the involvement of Artaxerxes and Epameinondas’ role as ambassador), it has often been suggested that Diodorus has mistakenly made a doublet. Thus many scholars have chosen to ignore Diodorus’ account in favour of Xenophon’s. 

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360 Stylianou (1998), 321-326, has suggested that Diodorus simply made a mistake when excerpting Ephorus, who may have written that the Thebans were excluded from the peace when, much more likely, they were threatened with exclusion. This is possible, but, see below.

361 See below, 89-94.

362 Diodorus is known for incorrectly repeating facts, see Lauffer (1959), 315-348; however, many of these mistakes may in fact be attributable to Ephorus, see Parker (2018), 189-206. Indeed, the question
However, in a fragment of Philochorus, a peace involving the Persian king is mentioned, which was similar to the Peace of Antalcidas (Philochorus FGrH F 151 = Didy. In Dem. col. 7). This can be equated with the Peace of 375/4, without any doubt, as he says that the Athenians set up an altar to Eirene in celebration of it, an action that is also confirmed by Nepos’ brief account of the peace (Nep. Tim. 2. 2-3). This appears to verify the involvement of Artaxerxes, which also indicates that Diodorus’ account cannot be completely erroneous. As a result of the fragment, some scholars have then accepted Persian intervention; though, still preferring to discount the other details provided by Diodorus.\(^{364}\)

The fact that a single detail in Diodorus’ account of the peace has been disputed should not be taken as sufficient evidence to indicate that its entirety must be cast aside. Xenophon is not without his faults either: he fails to specifically mention that the peace included anyone other than Athens and Sparta. Though their respective leagues encompassed the majority of significant city-states, it cannot truly be argued that Xenophon implied their inclusion.

Buck has provided probably the most convincing argument against Diodorus’ account. His argument is threefold: first, in the Philochorus fragment, the reference to the king is made by Didymus, not in his quotation of Philochorus; second, he argues that the Persian king’s desire to make peace in order to employ Greek mercenaries is a “recooking” of Cyrus’ actions, as well as a “rehash” of the events of 387/6; third, he gives several reasons why, he believes, the Theban exclusion from the peace is inconceivable.\(^{365}\) In the first place, Buck rightly points out that it is not Philochorus’ words, which invoke the Persian king’s influence; however, Didymus states that Philochorus wrote on the peace in question and, since he was Didymus’ main source on Athenian history, it is likely the information came from Philochorus. More pertinent is the fact that Didymus is referring to Demosthenes, who states that the Persian king had benefited Athens in the past (Dem. 10. 34): Didymus notes that some commentators (or just one) have equated this instance of benefaction with the

\(^{363}\) Unger (1867), 302; Grote (1872), 130, 155 n. 2; Stern (1884), 99, 155; Swoboda (1900), 2679-2680; Beloch (1922), 156 n. 1; Judeich (1927), 171-197; Roos (1949), 265-285; Buck (1994), 101-103.

\(^{364}\) Notably Cawkwell (1963), 90 n. 54; Ryder (1965), 124-126; Cawkwell (1979), 308; Gray (1980), 306-315. Jehne (1994), 57-64, agrees on the Persian intervention and Artaxerxes’ need for mercenaries, but also argues in favour of Diodorus’ doublet.

\(^{365}\) Buck (1994), 102-103.
King’s Peace of 387/6. Didymus reasonably rejects this notion and suggests Demosthenes meant either Conon and the Battle of Cnidus in 394 or another peace sponsored by the king and similar to the King’s Peace. This peace was recorded by Philochorus and included the erection of the altar to Eirene. It is doubtful that Didymus would have made this suggestion if he was not reasonably certain that the treaty involved Persia. He also states that the Athenians were exhausted by the cost of employing mercenaries, which is essentially confirmed by Xenophon.366 We might also add that Xenophon does not mention Persian involvement in the peaces of 371 or 366/5. Thus, it is reasonable to conclude that the Persian king was involved, at least in instigating the treaty. As for Buck’s second argument, the account certainly bears much similarity with the Peace of Antalcidas; however, so does the Peace of 371. The desire for the Thebes to be considered hegemons of Boeotia just as Sparta led Laconia, as well as Messenia, was nothing new: they had desired a measure of equality with Sparta and Athens at least as far back as the Peloponnesian war.367 It is somewhat unclear what Buck means by referring to Cyrus as he makes no citation, but perhaps he means how Cyrus sent orders to gather as many Peloponnesian mercenaries as he could, which would form the bulk of his 10,000 (Xen. Anab. 1. 1. 6). It does not need to be proven that the Greeks were regularly hired by the Persians up to and including Alexander the Great’s conquest.368 Furthermore, it is known that shortly after the Peace of 375/4 the Greeks did indeed send a mercenary army of 20,000 soldiers under the leadership of Iphicrates to Egypt (Diod. 15. 41. 1).

For the final part of Buck’s argument, he attempts to establish the inconceivability of Theban exclusion from the peace. However, Buck’s reasons for rejecting Theban exclusion are not watertight: he first states that a Spartan force was in Phocis, ready to attack Boeotia before the treaty, but did not attack. It should be emphasized that we are not at all certain about the intentions of the Spartans in Phocis: it is perfectly conceivable that they were there simply to prevent Theban intervention and expansion into the northwest. Second, he notes that the Spartan garrisons in Boeotia were removed: this seems incredible if Sparta was still hostile to Thebes. On this point he adds his third argument: Thebes could not have signed on behalf of the cities that were garrisoned. But when the Thebans wished to sign the

367 See discussions above, 58-62.
368 Parke (1933); Trundle (2004).
treaty for Boeotia, they must only have meant the members of the Boeotian League: the
garrisoned settlements (Thespiae, Plataea and Orchomenus) were not members of the league
and were therefore, at this stage, capable of signing the treaty for themselves. The removal of
garrisons was just part of the treaty’s autonomy clause. For his fourth point Buck argues that
Thebes could not have been excluded if they remained an active participant in the Second
Athenian League. Nevertheless, we have no reason to assume that Thebes would be removed
from the league if it was not included in the peace: members of the league were guaranteed
autonomy and could therefore refuse to sign any treaty they wished. Finally, Buck notes that
Diodorus may have made a doublet, copying information from the Peace of 371; however, as
we shall see, this factor is far from certain. Furthermore, Isocrates statement that Plataea was
attacked during peacetime does not necessarily infer that Thebes was a party to the peace;
rather, that Plataea signed the treaty as an independent state: they would not have expected
the Thebans to attack since two of the major parties (Athens and Sparta) had agreed to cease
hostilities.

Upon accepting Diodorus’ account, the question then arises whether we can believe
the story of Epameinondas’ altercation with Callistratus. Naturally those who accept only
Xenophon’s account are unwilling to accept this aspect of it. But their only way of refuting it
is to suggest that Diodorus was thinking of 371 because a similar incident occurred between
Epameinondas and Agesilaus (Plut. Ages. 27. 5-28. 3). Epameinondas was well known for
his eloquence of speech and high education: if he was so successful in his clash with
Agesilaus then he would be the perfect candidate on other occasions also. There is no
conclusive reason to deny the altercation; in fact, the other examples ought to make it more
convincing that such an incident was likely to have occurred. Whether it took place at the
peace conference or at Athens in an assembly of the allies is not entirely certain, but this does
not necessarily alter the significance of the verbal duel. If we can accept Epameinondas’
role in the negotiations for the Peace of 375/4 then we must also accept that his importance

369 In favour of this story see Curtius (1872), 130; Sherman (1952), 54-55 n. 1.
370 See below, 89-94. To add to this, see Cawkwell (1972), 257. Pomtow (1870), 56, makes no mention of
Epameinondas’ involvement, nor does he think Thebes was excluded from the peace.
372 Diodorus uses the term τῷ κοινῷ συνεδρίῳ (“common assembly”), a term, which by Diodorus is
usually used to refer to similar kinds of leagues, not peace assemblies, see Judeich (1927), 184 n. 1;
Lauffer (1959), 320; Stylianou (1998), 326-328.
within the Theban/Boeotian political scheme had grown to one of admirable prominence. He had been selected to represent Thebes as an ambassador, which was a position that was often taken by boeotarchs (Xen. *Hell. 7. 1. 33-36*). Though this does not necessarily prove that he had been elected as a boeotarch for this year, he was probably now in the running. A person of a low political status would surely not presume to speak in the assembly on behalf of Thebes, especially in such an inflammatory manner. Thus, by this stage, Epameinondas clearly commanded the confidence of the Theban people and was at, or nearly at, the highest echelons of his government. However, it should be noted that Epameinondas failed to achieve recognition for Theban hegemony of Boeotia: he probably expected that the Athenians would have endorsed this position and their failure to do so could have sparked his provocative rebuttal. If the Theban emissaries had conceded to terms almost as humiliating as the terms of the King’s Peace in 387/6, they would have returned home to a disappointed assembly.

Though Athens rejoiced at its re-acknowledgement as a hegemonic power, the peace did not last long and Athenian hostilities with Sparta resumed only a year or two afterwards when Timotheus aided the Zacynthian exiles. According to Xenophon, the Spartans blockaded Corcyra by land and sea under the leadership of Mnassipus. The Athenians responded by sending a force of peltasts under Ctesicles to attack by land and Timotheus was to attack by sea; however, his lengthy preparations caused the Athenian assembly to remove him from office and replace him with Iphicrates. The latter still arrived late and the local Corcyraeans managed to defeat the Spartan force and kill Mnassipus. Thus Iphicrates’ campaign gained only minor benefits for the Athenian League, which included capturing 10 Syracusan ships sent by Dionysius of Sicily in order to aid the now defeated Spartan fleet. There is evidence that Thebes played a significant role in the campaigns of the Athenian League during this period: Theban ships were incorporated into the navy (*IG II* 1607. 50, 155) and a Theban emissary is known to have sat on the allied council.

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373 The date of the resumption of hostilities has been variously estimated by scholars between 374 and late 373. See Buck (1994), 104 n. 8, for some of these attempts.
374 Xen. *Hell. 6. 2. 2-39*; Diod. 15. 45. 1-46.3, 47. 1-7. For accounts of the events between the peaces of 375/4 and 371, see Cary (1933), 76-78; Laistner (1936), 197-200; Hammond (1959), 490-492; Ryder (1965), 61-64; Sealey (1976), 415-419; Gray (1980), 315-326; Hamilton (1991), 195-199.
375 Bengston (1975), 268, see also Buck (1994), 104 n. 9.
Despite having technically given up their claims as leaders of the Boeotian League, the Thebans took advantage of the removal of the Spartan garrisons in Boeotian cities. In 373 they attacked and demolished the city of Plataea (Paus. 9. 1. 4-8), expelling the inhabitants from their land, who apparently sought and received refuge from Athens. Not long after this the cities of Thespiae and Orchomenus were subdued and incorporated into the league (Xen. 6. 3. 1, 4. 10; Diod. 15. 46. 4-6). Though there is no direct evidence that Epameinondas had anything to do with these events, in spite of his failure at the Peace of 375/4, it should by now be presumed that his role was to the fore. It has been suggested that these events reflect the policies of both Epameinondas and Pelopidas. This, of course, cannot be confirmed with certainty, but, as Swoboda admits, it is unlikely that his involvement was intermittent; rather, his efforts must have been concentrated. Furthermore, it must be reflected by his position as boeotarch and unquestioned general of the Boeotian army in 371, that he had been instrumental in establishing the prowess of the army and its revolutionary organization. This prominence of position could surely not have been attained in a single year.

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376 Pausanias states that the city was destroyed during the archonship of Asteius, see Momigliano (1936), 27ff.
377 There has been some suggestion that Thespiae underwent diœcism (διοικημός), much like Mantinea in 385, see Buckler (1977), 78; Tuplin (1986), 321-341. However, Buck (1994), 104, has not been convinced and thinks it more likely that its walls were torn down, though the city remained whole. Now see Snodgrass (2016), 9-31, who appears to generally agree with Buck.
378 Curtius (1872), 378-380.
379 Swoboda (1900), 2680.
Chapter 4
The Peace of 371 and the Battle of Leuctra

The Peace in Sparta

In 371, after a relatively fruitless campaign, Iphicrates sent Callistratus back to Athens with instructions to either procure more money or establish a peace treaty. Because of the expense of the campaign and the growing fear of Theban power, the latter option was chosen. Accordingly, a call for a general peace assembly in Sparta was made shortly afterwards, which invited all Spartan and Athenian allies, including Thebes (Xen. Hell. 6. 3. 1-3). There may very well have been a plea sent to Persia asking Artaxerxes to oversee the negotiations; however, the proceedings appear to have taken place before any Persian emissary was present. The ambassadors from all the various states arrived in Sparta sometime early in June and the terms were agreed upon on the 14th (Plut. Ages. 28. 5). Representing the Thesans, indeed attempting to represent all of Boeotia, was a small group of ambassadors, which included the boeotarch, Epameinondas.

Scholars have tended to suppose that this was Epameinondas’ first assumption of the office of boeotarch. Perhaps this is true but, as I have demonstrated above, throughout the 370s he was certainly active within the political realms of the Boeotian League. Because the

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380 The question of whether or not there was involvement from Artaxerxes has been subject to much debate. For the negative view see Underhill (1906), 239; Lauffer (1959), 321ff; Ryder (1963), 238 n.5; Ryder (1965), 127-128. For acceptance of Persian intervention see Grote (1872), 149, who assumes that Persian envoys were actually present at the assembly, though there is no evidence for this; Curtius (1872), 383-384; Cawkwell (1972), 258; Cawkwell (1979), 322; Hamilton (1991), 199; Buckler (2008), 41. For those less certain see Sealey (1976), 419-420; Buck (1994), 111-113. Diodorus specifically reports that the treaty was instigated by the king (Diod. 15. 50. 4), which appears to be confirmed by Dionysius of Halicarnassus (Dion. Lys. 12). The usual argument is that Diodorus is guilty of making a doublet, as in the Peace of 375/4 (see above, 81); however, in Xenophon’s Callistratus speech, he refers to Antalcidas returning from Persia with money from the king (Xen. Hell. 6. 3. 12). This seems to be ample evidence for some degree of Persian involvement. At the very least, a plea appears to have been sent to Artaxerxes asking him to act as guarantor. This view is also be adopted by Buckler (1980a), 48-49; Cartledge (1987), 379; Jehne (1994), 66-67.

381 Pomtow (1870), 56; Swoboda (1900), 2680, both assume it is his first time in office. Cawkwell (1972), 257, 263-4 n. 4, does not think he emerged as a statesman until 371 and that this was his first real prominent role.
boeotarchs of the previous year had to relinquish their power by the winter solstice (Plut. Pel. 24. 1), we can presume that he was elected into office in late December 372 or early January 371. Pomtow has imagined that, at this election, Epameinondas said the words which are iterated by Plutarch: “Yet, you must deliberate on this, men: for if I am general, you will go to war” (Plut. Reg. Imp. Apo. 71. 18/193e). Of course, even if this speech is authentic, there is no way to attribute it to one particular election and because Plutarch introduces it by the use of the somewhat ambiguous adverb ὅποτε, which could mean “when” or “whenever”, we have no way of knowing whether he said this every time he was elected, the first time, or another non-specific time. Despite this, it is a rather appropriate line to attach to his, alleged, first office as a boeotarch, which summarizes the sort of policy he would pursue.

Before the Peace of 371 Epameinondas was in office for five months. During this time, the Thebans were not likely to have assumed that a peace conference would be held in the middle of the year. It is then worth considering some of the events in the months leading up to the peace. Xenophon states that Athens sued for peace because the Thebans were campaigning against the Phocians (Xen. Hell. 6. 3. 1). No more details about this campaign are reported by the sources and some have been led to believe that this is a doublet of the previous invasion in 375, which was countered by a Spartan army under Cleombrotus. It seems more likely that Xenophon simply omitted to account for their return to Sparta probably when the garrisons were decommissioned following the Peace of 375/4. Because of this and the unlikelihood that Thebes would attack Phocis when it was occupied by a large Spartan contingent, some scholars have accepted the assumption that Cleombrotus had returned to Sparta. We do know, however, that by the time of the treaty, a Spartan army had been deployed in Phocis (Xen. Hell. 6. 4. 3; Plut. Ages. 28. 3), and, if we can accept that they were not there prior to 371, we can also assert that they were sent in reaction to the current Theban invasion. It is likely that, similar to the previous campaign, the Thebans retreated back to Boeotia upon the arrival of what was apparently a very large Spartan force.

382 ἔτι βουλεύσασθε, ἄνδρες: ἐὰν γὰρ ἐγώ στρατηγῶ, στρατευτέον ἐστίν ἵμιν.
383 Beloch (1922), 156 n. 1. A problem arises from Xenophon’s narrative, which fails to account for the Spartan army in Phocis between 375 and 371. According to a literal interpretation, Cleombrotus and the army never left Phocis (Xen. Hell. 6. 1. 1, 4. 2); however, this is most likely an omission on the fault of Xenophon’s, see Gray (1980), 309, for a discussion of the problem.
384 Buckler (1980a), 48-49; Buck (1994), 111.
If, for a moment, we assume that the invasion of Phocis was at the behest of the policy of Epameinondas, the quote that Plutarch claims he made appears to ring true. The Thebans had previously learnt that taking the pass at Mt. Cithaeron was the key to preventing the Spartans from invading Boeotia. Then, perhaps guessing that the next best point of entry would be via Phocis, the Thebans attempted to establish their dominance there in 375. The Spartans, realizing the Theban ploy, took their army to Phocis in order to secure the entrances into Boeotia. Then, again in 371, the Thebans made another attempt on Phocis and the Spartans reacted similarly. It is apparent that the Thebans were attempting to encircle the Peloponnesus: either they wished to blockade the Spartans into preventing them from having any further influence on city-states in central and northern Greece; or they may even have been intending to establish their positions for future invasions of the Peloponnesus.

Nevertheless, probably sometime in late May or early June the Thebans would have received the invitation to attend the peace conference in Sparta. With only a short few days to deliberate their plan of action they appear to have withdrawn their army from Phocis and then sent ambassadors, including Epameinondas. In Xenophon’s account of the proceedings the Athenian ambassadors gave several speeches, all variously condemning the Spartans and the Thebans for their actions before Callistratus gives his more moderate speech, accepting mistakes on all sides: he proposes that a peace be condoned in which the Spartans are considered the masters of land and the Athenians as the masters of the sea (Xen. Hell. 6. 3. 4-17). Whether or not these speeches actually reflect what each individual Athenian ambassador said or the manner in which the proceedings progressed is not entirely clear; however, the terms were agreed to by all sides with the exception of the Thebans.

At this point the sources diverge significantly: Xenophon states that the Athenians and their allies all signed the treaty individually as autonomous city-states, whereas the Spartans signed for Laconia and all of their allies. On the following day, the Theban ambassadors demanded that the terms of the treaty allow them to have signed for all of Boeotia, not just Thebes. Agesilaus, who had overseen the proceedings refused to allow this

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385 Though this is not specifically mentioned, by the time Cleombrotus prepared to attack, the Boeotian force had clearly returned to Boeotia (Xen. Hell. 6. 4. 3).
386 For detailed discussion of the speeches, terms and clauses of the peace see Mosley (1962), 41-46; Ryder (1963), 237-241; Ryder (1965), 64-69; Jehne (1994), 65-74.
but had no qualms about removing them from the treaty altogether (Xen. Hell. 6. 3. 19-20). Diodorus adds nothing substantial to this scenario, though there is no indication that the Thebans signed in the first place, merely that they wished to sign on behalf of Boeotia (Diod. 15. 50. 4-5). Neither of these accounts mention Epameinondas’ role as ambassador at these proceedings; on the other hand, the accounts of Plutarch, Nepos and Pausanias all confirm it. Like Diodorus, none of these report that Thebes agreed to sign at all and, more significantly, they refer to an altercation between Agesilaus and Epameinondas. According to Plutarch, whose account is the fullest, Epameinondas made an eloquent speech in front of the assembly, on behalf of all of Greece: he attacked Spartan imperialism and demanded that, if peace was declared in all fairness, it must be made on terms of equality and justice by all involved parties. Agesilaus replied by asking him whether he thought it just that the cities of Boeotia remain subject to Thebes. Epameinondas quickly retorted by asking Agesilaus if he thought it just that the cities of Laconia remain subject to Sparta. This altercation continued in the same manner until, in furious anger, Agesilaus removed the Thebans from the treaty.

Though the details of Xenophon’s account are generally favoured over all the others, most scholars accept the details of Epameinondas’ role during the proceedings. It is perhaps strange that Xenophon omitted his presence considering its significance, but few would deny his tendency to glorify Spartan activity and condemn the Thebans. The speech and the altercation served to exemplify and attack Spartan imperial inclinations and, though Agesilaus justifiably struck their signatures from the treaty, the eloquence and inflammatory nature of Epameinondas’ verbal duel allowed the Thebans to come away with a certain amount of dignity. It is therefore no surprise that Xenophon attempted to diminish the moral victory, which the Thebans did achieve, albeit isolating themselves to face the might of Sparta alone. It has, in fact, been suggested that the speech that Xenophon attributes to the Athenian ambassador Autocles is far too antagonistic towards Sparta (Xen. Hell. 6. 3. 7-9), thus being contrary to the Athenian motivation for attempting to establish a peace. This

387 Plut. Ages. 27. 3-28. 2; Nepos. Epam. 6. 4; Paus. 9. 3. 1.
388 Notable exceptions include Sealey (1976), 419-420, who relies almost entirely on Xenophon for his discussion of the peace; Swoboda (1900), 2680-2681, is suspicious of the details of Plutarch's account; however, he accepts Epameinondas' presence, which is odd because the sources that confirm his presence also confirm the altercation with Agesilaus.
389 Hamilton (1991), 201, also adds that Epameinondas' speech may have been a strong instigator for some of Sparta's Peloponnesian allies to desire estrangement from the league (Nep. Epam. 6. 4), which is also something Xenophon would have been hesitant to admit.
suggestion has led to the speculation that Xenophon actually disguised Epameinondas’ speech under the guise of Autocles’.\textsuperscript{390} Though such a claim could never be proven, Autocles’ speech is consistent with the sentiments of Epameinondas, as presented by Plutarch and Nepos. If there is a semblance of truth in this suggestion, Ryder may indeed be correct in proposing that the speeches, as presented by Xenophon, reflect the successive stages in the negotiations.\textsuperscript{391} Therefore, it is possible that Autocles’ speech reflects the anti-Spartan sentiments at the treaty, which may have been primarily exhorted by the Thebans, namely Epameinondas. Instead of crediting such a speech to the likes of the illustrious boeotarch, Xenophon preferred to reflect these ideals through an Athenian orator, which further serves to undermine the significance of the Theban’s presence during the proceedings.

Upon reconciling Xenophon’s account with that of Plutarch, Nepos and Pausanias, the question remains why Epameinondas waited until the following day to make the demand to sign on behalf of Boeotia. Stern concluded that, under the obligations of the Athenian Confederacy, the Thebans were compelled to sign merely as members of the alliance; then, later they decided to attempt to include all of Boeotia.\textsuperscript{392} Cawkwell makes two suggestions: one, that the Thebans wrongly assumed that their signatures would be counted as valid for all of Boeotia, then, realizing their mistake, demanded the inscription be altered on the following day; two, that the Theban ambassadors’ nerves failed during the proceedings and perhaps Epameinondas managed to convince them to change their minds overnight. Cawkwell gives more credence to the latter option as the impression given by Xenophon is that the Thebans changed their mind.\textsuperscript{393} A mistake seems somewhat unlikely; however, fear may explain the situation to an extent. As Buckler points out,\textsuperscript{394} a similar situation had occurred during the Peace of 375/4 in which the Thebans had attempted to have the Boeotian League legitimately recognised, which they failed to achieve. However, in the case of this peace, the autonomy clause in which no state would be obligated to come to the defence of another, would allow the Spartans to attack Thebes whether they were included in the peace or not. It then seems apparent that the Theban ambassadors decided it was more advantageous to make a stand.

\textsuperscript{390} Shipley (1997), 311-313.  
\textsuperscript{391} Ryder (1965), 65.  
\textsuperscript{392} Stern (1884), 130-131.  
\textsuperscript{393} Cawkwell (1972), 265.  
\textsuperscript{394} Buckler (1980a), 52-53. See also Buckler (2008), 41-42.
rather than accept the terms of a peace, which, if signed, would publicly relinquish their hegemony over Boeotia. It is unclear whether such an outcome was expected by Epameinondas and the other Theban ambassadors, but judging from the kind of policy he followed and would continue to follow, there is faint likelihood that he would have bowed to the behest of Sparta and Athens.395

Following the treaty, the Spartans wasted very little time. Cleombrotus, who was commanding the army in Phocis sent word to the assembly asking for instructions. In accordance with the terms of the peace they were obligated to withdraw all garrisons, indeed, one Prothous tried to convince the Ephors that they ought to withdraw Cleombrotus, make offerings to Apollo and await the full support of their allies before attempting an expedition against Thebes. Prothous’ advice was not accepted and the council voted to send the army. According to Plutarch, this decision was given strong support from Agesilaus, which is a detail Xenophon was probably happy to omit (Xen. Hell. 6. 4. 2-3; Plut. Ages. 28. 3-4). Before marching out, Cleombrotus allegedly sent out an ultimatum to the Thebans, instructing them to make all the cities of Boeotia independent. This was promptly rejected and the Spartan army set forth from Phocis (Diod. 15. 51. 3-4; Aristid. 12. 7).396

It is said that when the Theban ambassadors returned home, they were in a state of despondency or ἀθύμως (Xen. Hell. 6. 3. 20). If this is so, it is unlikely to be because they expected Sparta to give in to their demands, but perhaps because they had hoped that Athens would offer them some form of support.397 Either way, they surely had good reason to feel

395 It is accepted by many scholars that Epameinondas was well aware of the consequences of his actions during the peace and had genuinely been planning on instigating further hostilities with Sparta. See Pottow (1870), 59; Grote (1872), 162; Meyer (1913), 405-407; Beloch (1922), 163-164; Cartledge (1987), 379-380. Cawke (1972), 264-265, even suggests that the speech, which Epameinondas delivered at the meeting, foreshadowed his intention of liberating Messenia and bringing Spartan tyranny to its knees. More recently Roisman (2017), 286-287, proposed that Epameinondas was using the “common ploy” of attempting to alter the terms of an agreement following its accord, assuming that those involved would be willing to compromise in order to salvage the peace. This is certainly a possibility.

396 Grote (1872), 167 n. 2, is doubtful of this though he offers little reason. Buck (1994), 113 n. 66, half-heartedly rejects Diodorus’ statement but is clearly not entirely certain. Other recent scholars have tended to accept the ultimatum: see Buckler (1980a), 54-55; Hamilton (1991), 203-204; Roisman (2017), 288. Stylianou (1998), 387, has noted that Xenophon actually implies the existence of such an ultimatum as he states that Cleombrotus was instructed to attack only if they did not give the Boeotians their independence (ἀλλ’ εὐθὺς ἀγείν ἐπὶ τοὺς Θηβαίους, εἰ μὴ αὐτονόμους αφίσαι τὰς πόλεις: Xen. Hell. 6. 4. 3).

397 Grote (1872), 162.
nervous knowing they would have to face the might of the Spartan army by themselves. On their return, an assembly was called, which deliberated on the course of action for the defence of Boeotia. Such an assembly is referred to by Diodorus, though he appears to have befuddled several of his facts. He reports that some of the Thebans proposed to send their women and children to Athens for safety. Diodorus gives the impression that this proposal was voted upon and implemented, which is doubtful. Pausanias notes a similar instance just before the battle in which some of the boeotarchs began to lose their nerve and suggested a comparable proposal before sealing themselves off inside the city (Paus. 9. 13. 6). This, as Stylianou suggests,\(^{398}\) may indicate that Ephorus’ account could have contained an episode in which Epameinondas urged the assembly to vote in favour of marching out to meet Cleombrotus head on; however, some may have opposed this, preferring the former option. If such a proposal was indeed made at the assembly, it clearly did not get enough support to be put into practice.

Diodorus then further states that Epameinondas was made general and given primary command during the war, whereas the other six boeotarchs would act merely as his advisors. Though it is certainly true that the boeotarchs could relinquish their power in favour of one or two,\(^{399}\) the fact that they would later vote on the decision to fight just before the battle demonstrates that (Diod. 15. 53. 3), on this occasion, all the boeotarchs were exercising equal authority.\(^{400}\) Nepos also refers to Epameinondas’ position during the battle as *imperatore* (Nep. *Pel* . 4. 2), which seems to indicate a position of military eminence. It may in fact have been Diodorus’ intention (or mistake) not to assert that he was voted as superior to the other boeotarchs; rather, that he was given the position as leader in the army, i.e. that he would be the primary officer in charge while the actual engagement took place. Regardless of the manner in which the assembly proceeded, the vote was in favour of meeting the Spartans in the field and the Boeotian army assembled.

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\(^{398}\) Stylianou (1998), 389.

\(^{399}\) Buckler (1980a), 26-27.

\(^{400}\) Stylianou (1998), 389.
The Omens

Before accounting for the troop movements prior to the battle and the battle itself, it is worth discussing separately the various omens and prophecies that apparently occurred on the road to Leuctra. At this stage Diodorus mentions two separate omens that occurred, presumably before the full Boeotian force had gathered. When the Theban soldiers were marching out of the city, a blind herald, who was hoping to recover some runaway slaves, warned that they must be brought back unharmed. This rather ambiguous instance was interpreted by some of the older people to be an omen, though Diodorus does not express whether he thinks it was good or bad (Diod. 15. 52. 3-4). In response to this, Epameinondas is said to have quoted from the Iliad, saying “One omen is best, to fight for our fatherland” (Hom. Il. 12. 243).

Shortly afterwards another omen appeared. The clerk or registrar (γραμματεύς), having signalled some orders during the advance, was seized by a heavy breeze that caused the ribbon on his spear to rip. It nestled upon a grave where Peloponnesian soldiers had been killed during one of Agesilaus’ campaigns a few years earlier. This sign was interpreted by some as opposition from the gods; though, Epameinondas is said to have believed that nobility and justice were the preferred interpretations and he refused to respond (Diod. 15. 52. 5-6). Frontinus offers a slightly different version of this story, saying that the ribbon was torn off of Epameinondas’ spear himself. To this he accordingly said that tombs are only decorated for funerals, thus the omen foretells the Spartans’ defeat (Front. Strat. 1. 12. 5). Though these omens are not confirmed by any of the other major sources, the discrepancy between Diodorus and Frontinus indicates that the latter was using an alternate source, but in a similar tradition. The authenticity of the passages cannot be established, but it is likely that a number of alternate versions of the same story began to circulate shortly after the battle. Stylianou asserts that the passage in Diodorus is part of the Ephoran theme of παιδεία in which Ephorus demonstrates the superiority of Epameinondas’ intellect over the superstitious masses (πολλοί).

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401 Sherman (1952), 97 n. 1, suggests that the omen was interpreted negatively because the Thebans had lately been “slaves” to the Spartans; thus, if they marched forth from the city their destruction was portended.
402 ἐξ οἴκων ὀριστός ὁμόνεσθαι περὶ πάτης.
When the armies had arrived at Leuctra, the Boeotians were greatly fearful of the coming battle, considering the previous omens they had perceived and the size of the Spartan army. Realizing this, Epameinondas appears to have taken matters into his own hands in order to boost the morale of his troops. He accordingly carefully fabricated favourable omens in an attempt to counter the previous ones. The story is variously reported but the general idea is that he secretly ordered some men to remove the weapons from the statue of Heracles at the temple in Thebes. Some accounts state that Epameinondas merely instructed newcomers to the camp to make claims of this phenomenon (Diod. 15. 53. 4; Xen. Hell. 6. 4. 7), whereas others claim that he actually sent people to remove the weapons: either so that they disappeared (Front. Strat. 1. 11. 16), or that they were polished and placed on the floor (Polyaen. 2. 3. 8). Interestingly another account is given in a fragment of Callisthenes via Cicero, which accepts the incident as a genuine omen, declaring that the doors of the temple burst open and the armour of the statue was found on the floor. As well as this, Diodorus and Polyaenus say that he further instructed a man to appear, claiming to have been sent by Trophonius, who said that they would be victorious if they attacked first (Polyaen. 2. 3. 8) and that on this day they must hold a festival in honour of Trophonius at Lebadea (Diod. 15. 53. 4). The same fragment of Callisthenes also describes a similar instance, accepting it as a genuine omen. The difference between Diodorus and the Polyaenus-Frontinus accounts may reflect the difference in the material presented by Ephorus and Callisthenes. Either way, there are clearly at least two traditions: the first, in which Epameinondas employed these measures as *strategemata*; the second, that these were considered authentic omens, as Callisthenes said, being officially legitimized by the Boeotian augurs. From a modern point of view, the fact that Xenophon admits that reports of the omens being falsified later emerged should be taken as good evidence that they were devices employed by the Boeotian leaders, namely Epameinondas. The existence of an alternate tradition may indicate the overwhelming success that these devices had: because of their victory, a large proportion of the populace

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405 Xenophon agrees that messengers came from Thebes and that afterwards these were said to be *strategemata* (τέχνασμα) but he is generally inclined to accept superstitions, see Stylianou (1998), 393.
406 Callisthenes FGrH 124 F 22a = Cic. Div. 1. 74-78. This fragment also purports that the Spartans received omens from both Dodona and Delphi that foretold their defeat: it is apparent that Callisthenes wrote a great deal on the omens before Leuctra, see Rzekpa BN 124 F 22a.
would have willingly believed such things in spite of reports to the contrary, which, in their eyes, might serve to diminish the victory.

Pausanias records an alternative (or addition) to the oracle from Trophonius. He describes a Theban tradition in which responses were received from Ismenian and Ptoan Apollo, along with replies from Abae and Delphi, though he does not go into any detail on these. From Lebadea, however, Trophonius apparently implored the Thebans to set up a trophy adorned with the shield that Aristomenes, the Messenian hero, placed in the temple. If this were done Trophonius would ensure the Spartans’ defeat. On hearing of this, Epameinondas sent Xenocrates, a fellow boeotarch, to retrieve the shield. They then set up the trophy somewhere in view of the Spartan army so it could be clearly seen. Apparently, the shield was well known and most of the enemy would recognize it, especially since it was said to have been emblazoned with an eagle. Pausanias ties this in with a Messenian tradition that Aristomenes briefly returned from the dead to fight at Leuctra and was instrumental in the Theban victory (Paus. 4. 32. 4-6). While the tradition of Aristomenes’ presence may well have been fabricated post hoc, a contemporary inscription, which refers to the use of a trophy and includes the name of Xenocrates may indicate some truth to the use of Aristomenes’ shield at the battle (IG VII 2467). If it can be confirmed that stories of Aristomenes and his shield were already prevalent by this period, it would have been highly fitting for Epameinondas to have utilized their symbolic importance. Because of its status as a magical item and a weapon against Sparta, the use of such an artefact could well have inspired a certain amount of fear, especially amongst the Spartiates.408

Other omens have also been recorded by Polyaenus and Frontinus, which are not, however, mentioned by any of the major sources. At the temple of Athena in Thebes, Epameinondas apparently employed a similar device, almost identical to the one mentioned above, in which the arms of Athena changed position (Polyaen. 2. 3. 13). There is also mention of a meteor, which flew over the night sky and Epameinondas exclaimed to the soldiers that it was a light sent from heaven (Front. Strat. 1. 12. 6).409 Frontinus further tells

408 On Aristomenes and his shield at Leuctra, see Ogden (2004), 26, 62, 75-77, 86, 138-142.
409 There was a meteor confirmed to have been sighted around this time (Aristot. Meteor. 1. 6, 343 b 23; Diod. 15. 50. 2; Sen. Quaest. Nat. 7. 5 = FGH 124 F21), which has often been conjectured to be one of the Kreutz Sungrazers family of comets that Pingre (1783), 259-263, roughly calculated to have passed in 371
us that, just before the battle, the seat Epameinondas was sitting on gave way, which was interpreted as an unlucky omen by the soldiers; to this he replied that it only meant that they must not sit down, but fight (Front. *Strat.* 1. 12. 7).

The most prominent of all of the omens is the story of the daughters of Scedasus, known as the Leuctridae, who were violated by Spartan men and, being overcome with shame and grief, they committed suicide. Plutarch says that Pelopidas had a dream in which Scedasus demanded that he sacrifice a fair-haired virgin to appease his daughters. When he told the seers and the officers, there was debate about whether or not to act upon the dream. Fortunately, a fire-coloured filly broke away from the herd and Theocritus the seer declared that this was the virgin. The young horse was then decorated with garlands and sacrificed at the tomb of the daughters of Scedasus. Though it is doubtful a human sacrifice was actually considered, the story’s prominence in the sources suggests that it was widely known at the time of the battle, or at least not long afterwards. It is therefore not unbelievable that a filly was offered up as a representation of a true virgin sacrifice, in the manner of Iphigenia, before the Trojan War. Pausanias says that Epameinondas made the sacrifice himself (Paus. 9. 13. 6).

B.C., see Kronk (1999), 4-5. However, recent astronomers tend to view these claims with suspicion, see Sekanina and Chodas (2007), 673-674. It must also be admitted that the dates which these ancient writers associate with the sighting of the meteor are not certain and likely to have occurred significantly earlier than the Battle of Leuctra. Despite this, Diodorus does claim that the meteor was interpreted to foretell the fall of Spartan supremacy; therefore, Frontinus, or his source, may have mistakenly assumed that the meteor occurred nearer the time of the battle. Perhaps the story originates from Epameinondas’ response to claims that the meteor foretold the destruction of his own country.

410 Though consumption of horse meat at Greek sanctuaries was not particularly unusual, it is not thought that this was part of any ritual and examples in literature of horse sacrifice by Greeks are spectacular in nature: we hear of the ritual drowning of horses for Poseidon (Hom. *Il.* 21. 132; Paus. 8. 7. 2) and the brutal burning of four live horses at Patroclus’ funeral (Hom. *Il.* 23. 171-172), see Ekroth (2017), 36, 40. Festus also tells us that the Spartans used to immolate horses on Mt. Taygetus and blow the ashes into the wind (Festus 13. *October Equus*). In the case of Leuctra, we are given the impression that the sacrifice was done in the usual manner. If Epameinondas did indeed slaughter a filly, it is a rare example of horse sacrifice in ancient Greece.

411 Xen. *Hell.* 6. 4. 7; Diod. 15. 54. 1-3; Plut. *Pel.* 20-22; *De Herod.* 11/856f; *Amat.* 3/773b-774b; Paus. 9. 13. 5. The story of the demand for a virgin sacrifice is likely to be a *post hoc* invention and may have been used to parallel Agesilau’s attempted sacrifice of a deer at Aulis in 396, which the Boeotians prevented (Plut. *Ages.* 6). There too, Plutarch says that a virgin sacrifice (Agesilaus’ daughter) was considered. Both stories are clearly meant to evoke Agamemnon’s sacrifice of Iphigenia, who, in some versions, was also substituted with a deer. In each case the sacrifice is made at the beginning of a conflict, the outcome of which is good for those who successfully complete the sacrifice. Other parallels include the daughters of Orion, Menippe and Metioche, who offered themselves in order quell a plague (Ant. *Lib.* 25; Ov. *Met.* 13. 65-99); the daughters of Antipoenus, Androcleia and Aleis, also offered themselves to help secure a victory for Heracles and the Thebans against Orchomenus (Paus. 9. 17. 1); and, possibly relevant, during
The abundance of all of these alleged omens should not come as too much of a surprise considering the incredible significance and unprecedented result of the battle. Whether or not such phenomena occurred is a matter for much speculation and argument; however, the purpose of the sources to include them was surely in an attempt to demonstrate Epameinondas’ intellect and ability to quell the fears of his superstitious soldiers. Thus, with his oratorical prowess he successfully refuted all such claims of bad omens and with his skill and ingenuity he further constructed a series of blatantly good omens, which ensured the confidence of his troops before engaging the enemy.

The Road to Leuctra

Upon realizing that the Thebans would not yield, Cleombrotus led his army from Phocis into Boeotia. He accordingly marched to Chaeronea, apparently to await the arrival of more allies (Diod. 15. 52. 1). Naturally being aware of the oncoming Spartan army, Epameinondas, having gathered his troops took what was probably the bulk of the army to the pass at Coronea just a few kilometres east, which was situated between a steep slope and Lake Copais (Diod. 15. 52. 7; Paus. 9. 13. 3). These narrows would prevent the Spartans from making the most of their superior numbers. As well as this, in case there was any attempt to flank the Boeotian defence, a smaller detachment under the boeotarch, Brachillydes, was sent to guard the pass at Mt. Cithaeron (Paus. 9. 13. 7) and probably an even smaller force under

the Messenian Wars, the Delphic oracle demanded a virgin sacrifice, which ended up being achieved when Aristomenes murdered his own daughter (Paus. 4. 9. 3-10). See Westlake (1939), 13; Burkert (1979), 74-75; Buckler (1980a), 61-62; Hughes (1991), 82-86, 109-111; Larson (1995), 135-138; Georgiadou (1997), 160-172; Stylianou (1998), 394-305. For further bibliography see Georgiadou (1997), 165-166.

412 Similar such events include Philip II’s adorning of his soldiers with laurel wreaths in order to appease Apollo before the Battle of Crocus Field in 352 (Just. 8. 2. 3-5) and the dream of Eumenes before a battle with Neoptolemus and Craterus in 321 (Plut. Eum. 6. 5-6).

413 I accept the re-emendation of Tuplin (1979), 351-356: Wesseling (1798), 395, had previously proposed that the text should be altered to Ἐρώνειαν or Χιρώνειαν. These appear to clearly transliterate to Chaeronea and it would make very little sense if Cleombrotus camped at Coronea but did not secure the nearby pass, thus allowing Epameinondas to do so. This apparent blunder is still maintained in modern editions, e.g. Vial (1977), 66; Sherman (1952), 96.

414 Much of this discussion will imply that Epameinondas made all of the significant decisions. It should be noted that there is no evidence to prove that the other boeotarchs did not contribute to the strategemata and that all of them were quite capable of proposing ideas. It is perhaps likely that Epameinondas was the mastermind behind the majority of the tactics, but the assumption should not be made.
Chaireas, who was ordered to guard the routes over Mt. Helicon to the southwest of their position near Coronea (Paus. 9. 13. 3). It is apparent that Epameinondas was hoping to engage the Spartans at the pass, but he was certainly aware of the possibility of a flanking manoeuvre. Burn points out that the Phalarus valley, which runs between the pass at Coronea and Mt. Helicon, would have provided an efficient line of communication between the two forces. Thus, not wishing to assume that Cleombrotus would attack where the Boeotians were at a strategic advantage, Epameinondas had established his positions in the defence of Boeotia.

Seeing that the pass had already been secured, Cleombrotus pulled back his army to the Phocian town of Ambrossus (Paus. 9. 13. 3). Then he marched along the path that rises across Mt. Helicon, which eventually leads to Thisbae (Xen. Hell. 6. 4. 3). While crossing this route he encountered the force under Chaireas and apparently killed (ἀποκτείνας) the entire detachment (Paus. 9. 13. 3). From Thisbae he traversed the difficult path that leads to Creusis where he promptly occupied the town and captured either 10 (Diod. 15. 53. 1) or 12 triremes (Xen. Hell. 6. 4. 3-4). Lying on the coast to the southwest of Leuctra, Cleombrotus had now opened himself a useful supply and reinforcement line across the Corinthian Gulf. Presumably, after leaving some sort of garrison at Creusis, he then crossed the mountain range that lay to the north and made his way into the plain of Leuctra. Cleombrotus’ flanking movement demonstrated his skill in manoeuvring soldiers quickly and over a long distance. Though Epameinondas’ placement of the detachment under Chaireas showed excellent foresight, its decimation at the hands of the Spartans was likely to be a major blow to the defenders’ morale. When Mt. Helicon was taken, it is evident that a messenger was quickly sent to the main Boeotian force to warn them of the Spartans’ movements. Without further hesitation, Epameinondas readied his soldiers and marched at speed in order to prevent the Spartans from attacking Thebes undefended.

415 Buckler (1980a), 55, suggests that Brachillydes’ force consisted of between 500 and 1,000 men and that Chaireas’ held the rank of lochagos. I might further suggest that the latter’s detachment consisted of not more than a few hundred soldiers, perhaps even just peltasts.

416 Burn (1949), 321. Also see Buckler (1980a), 55-56 esp. n. 16.

Before marching, Epameinondas appears to have sent a messenger to Mt. Cithaeron, ordering the contingent under Brachillydes to rejoin the main force (Paus. 9. 13. 7). Some scholars presumed that the army returned to Thebes before marching to Leuctra, which is an assumption that should obviously be discounted. This mistake probably arose from the confusing manner in which Diodorus accounts for the manoeuvres and the omens that occurred along the way. It would only make sense if the full Boeotian force had not been sent to Coronea, but Epameinondas could hardly have expected to hold out against the full might of the Spartan army with only a portion of his force. However, some extra soldiers from Thebes may have joined them as they neared the battlefield as is reported by Diodorus (Diod. 15. 53. 4). Very little is attested about the route the Boeotians took to reach Leuctra, but the path is reasonably obvious. The army probably marched along the lowland path to the southeast of Mt. Helicon, which leads past Thespiae, then continues southward toward the Corinthian Gulf until they reached the plain of Leuctra (Diod. 15. 53. 1-2). Burn inexplicably assumes that the Boeotian force arrived first, which is surely to the contrary according to the sources. Thus, having sighted the Spartan army on the hills south of the plain, the Boeotians encamped on the low ridges to the north, with a distance of about two kilometres between the opposing forces.

It is likely that, upon making camp, both sides rested for the remainder of the day, allowing time for Brachillydes to arrive with the rest of the army. In the meantime the Boeotians held a war council, in order to decide whether or not to fight. This is recorded in the best detail by Pausanias who says that the boeotarchs were divided in opinion: Epameinondas, Malgis and Xenocrates were in favour of battle and Damocleidas, Damophilus and Simangelus apparently preferred the idea of sending their women and children to Athens while barricading themselves behind the walls of Thebes (Paus. 9. 13. 6). Plutarch also adds that Pelopidas strongly urged the boeotarchs to support a decision to fight

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418 Grote (1872), 167; Pomtow (1870), 60.
419 Other than the works cited in n. 413, see also Hamilton (1991), 204, for the movements of the Boeotian troops.
420 Diod. 15. 3. 2; Xen. Hell. 6. 4. 4; Plut. Pel. 20. 4. See Burn (1949), 322; cf. Anderson (1970), 195, 320 n. 17; Stylianou (1998), 392.
421 Buckler (1980a), 60-61, determined the approximate positions of the camps from his personal observations on March 12, 1971.
Xenophon reports the reasons, which compelled the Thebans to fight: in the event of their defeat some Boeotian cities might revolt and Thebes would be captured and enslaved or destroyed. They also further reasoned that, because many of them had been enslaved or exiled by the Spartans only eight years before, they would rather die than allow it to happen again (Xen. *Hell.* 6. 4. 6). These sentiments may well reflect the subject of discussion during the war council. After some time of disagreement Brachillydes arrived, quickly giving his support to Epameinondas and they agreed upon the decision to risk open battle with the Spartan army (Paus. 9. 13. 6).

Swoboda doubts the authenticity of this scenario as pictured by Diodorus, Pausanias and Plutarch. He argues that it bears striking similarities to the Athenian war council before the Battle of Marathon (Hdt. 6. 109-110); therefore, the story was imagined by those wishing to glorify Epameinondas. Presumably, this argument is also based on the fact that Xenophon records only the Thebans’ motivation to fight and makes no mention of their division. Despite this, the story is reported by three of the major ancient writers on the topic and most probably came from Ephorus or Callisthenes. Hamilton suggests that the discrepancy may be explained by the fact that Xenophon was writing from the Spartan side and may have simply been unaware of what really went on in the Boeotian camp. Furthermore, the fact that Pausanias records the names of all seven boeotarchs implies that he had access to fairly detailed information. It may be noted that the inclusion of Brachillydes’ return from Mt. Cithaeron is a likely scenario, which, assuming there were indeed seven boeotarchs, would have made an even division of opinion possible until the seventh one arrived. In spite of any argument to the contrary, the division amongst the boeotarchs is widely accepted by scholars.

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423 Anderson (1970), 196. n. 20, believes this is false because Plutarch gives the impression that Pelopidas had an equal vote (ψηφίζω); however, he was not a boeotarch on this occasion, thus could not have voted. Despite this, it is likely that Pelopidas’ opinion would have helped to sway the council, being probably the most eminent citizen at the time; therefore, Plutarch may have misinterpreted the wording of his source.
424 Swoboda (1900), 2682-2683.
425 Hamilton (1991), 207 n. 91.
426 By now it would have been Theban policy to guard the Cithaeron when attack from the Peloponnèsus was imminent considering it was the path used on several previous campaigns. Because Pausanias is the only source that records this information, which, in his absence, one could guess anyway, it is perhaps safe to assume that his rendering of it bears some authenticity.
427 Rüstow and Köchly (1852), 172; Pomitow (1870), 61-65; Anderson (1970), 196; Buckler (1980a), 61-62; Buckler (2013), 659-660.
In another instance before the battle, Epameinondas, being suspicious of them, apparently allowed the Thespian hoplites to return home along with any other Boeotian who did not wish to fight (Paus. 9. 13. 8, 14. 1; Polyaen. 2. 3. 3). Some earlier scholars have disputed this occurrence due to its reminiscence with Leonidas, who sent home the Spartan allies at the Battle of Thermopylae (Hdt. 7. 219-220).\footnote{Meissner (1798), 226b; Swoboda (1900), 2683.} Again, Xenophon’s omission has probably affected their position on the matter. Buckler points out that the inclusion of the Thespian departure would have made the Spartan defeat all the more humiliating, therefore unsurprising that Xenophon would ignore this fact.\footnote{Buckler (1977), 79 n. 13. Nor should one confuse the departure of the baggage-carriers as mentioned by Xenophon with the Thespians (Xen. Hell. 6. 4. 9), as does Anderson (1970), 200, cf. Buckler (1977), loc. cit.} The presence of two parallels with Herodotus’ account of the Persian wars is certainly curious and may lead one to doubt some of the details, but a similarity with past events should not cause us to discount it entirely. In the case of Thermopylae, more than half the allies of the force are said to have dispersed (Hdt. 7. 219-222),\footnote{See Green (1996), 140, for the numbers of the Greek force at Thermopylae.} whereas the Thespian contingent at Leuctra was not likely to be comparably as large, probably less than 1,000.\footnote{According to the constitution of the previous Boeotian League, each of the 11 districts had to provide 1,000 hoplites and 100 cavalry (Hell. Oxy. 2. 4). The Thespians provided 700 doomed hoplites in 480 at Thermopylae (Hdt. 7. 202-203), a figure that may represent the entire hoplite force of the city, see Buck (1979), 132. Though they provided 1,800 troops to the Persians at the Battle of Plataea in 479 (Hdt. 9. 30), these were the survivors of the recent destruction of their city and were not fully armed; therefore, they are likely to reflect the remaining number of men capable of fighting. Another force of Thespians underwent heavy casualties at the Battle of Delium in 424 (Thuc. 4. 96. 3), with about 300 dead, see Demand (1982), 110-118. This comprised perhaps half of the total Thespian hoplite force, see Hanson (1999), 203-218 n. 15. Then, at the later Battle of Nemea in 394, the Thespian contingent also appears to have suffered heavy losses (Xen. Hell. 4. 2. 20); Hanson (1999), 203-218, estimates a total force of between 600 and 1,000 with about 300 to 600 casualties. Considering the trend for every generation or so of Thespian hoplites to be severely cut down, one would not expect their ability to field troops in 371 to be much different, particularly as they had been chastised by the Thebans in 373.} While this was still a significant loss for the Boeotian army, the Thespian soldiers were a relatively new addition to the league;\footnote{Probably around 373, see above, 88.} consequently, they may not have been trained and integrated into the new Theban way of fighting, which the Boeotians had been refining. And, as we shall see, Epameinondas was not planning on achieving victory by making the most of his numbers.
Around the same time a group of Lacedaemonian mercenaries, Phocian peltasts and horsemen from Heraclea and Phlius led by the Spartan commander, Hieron, attempted a skirmishing assault on the Boeotian camp. He must have approached from the rear, north of the camp, so as not to be seen. Unbeknownst to Hieron, he arrived when a number of the Boeotian non-combatants were departing. Thinking them the enemy he attacked and drove many of them back to the camp (Xen. *Hell* 6. 4. 9). This minor sortie therefore achieved next to nothing for the Spartans.  

Perhaps in the morning before the battle, Epameinondas is said to have held an assembly (ἐκκλησία), during which the Spartan exile, Leandrias, spoke of a Spartan proverb that foretold their defeat at the hands of the Thebans (Diod. 15. 54. 1). If such an assembly was actually held, it would not be surprising if Epameinondas gave a speech to encourage his men. Bauch and Pomtow both imagined such an oration in which Epameinondas refers to all the injustices of the Spartans and the various favourable omens that had appeared.  

Although there is no direct evidence for this, it would have been the ideal way to rouse his men into battle-readiness. He had clearly put a lot of effort into fabricating these good omens and it would have been useful to emphasize this as well as refute the bad ones. Polyaenus may also relate part of this speech: when addressing his men before the battle, Epameinondas used a snake as analogous for the Spartan army. He then crushed its head, demonstrating how the body will fall when the head is destroyed. Thus, the soldiers understood that they only had to beat the Spartiate troops in order to win (Polyaen. 2. 3. 15). If this passage can be trusted, we can see that Epameinondas was attempting to explain the effectiveness of his tactics by analogy, which was apparently well understood and helped to inspire confidence. Whatever he may have done, the Boeotian leaders’ attempts to encourage their men in the face of disheartening odds is surely a testament to their cunning and the bravery of their men.

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433 Buckler (1977), 76-79. Buckler (2013), 660, asserts that Hieron was killed in the skirmish, but there is no reason to think this. Hieron had only attacked non-combatants and he probably withdrew once they had returned to the safety of the Boeotian camp.
434 Bauch (1834), 28-37; Pomtow (1870), 61-65.
435 Anderson (1970), 201; Hamilton (1991), 207-208, have no problem accepting the passage, though it has not been widely discussed.
436 The assertion that generals gave exhortations to their troops before battle has been disputed by Hansen (1991), 161-180; however, in a lengthy refutation, Pritchett (1994), 27-109, convincingly
The Battle

There has been a wide variety of discussion over the exact nature of both sides’ strategies and the manner in which the battle unfolded. The following discussion attempts to establish the general nature of the battle in order to determine how it most likely unfolded and the extent to which the battle can be considered a significant landmark in the evolution of military ingenuity. Most of the discussion surrounding the battle has involved reconciling Plutarch’s *Pelopidas* with Xenophon, where it is generally agreed that the latter’s account is accurate but incomplete; therefore, provided there is no contradiction, Plutarch’s account helps to fill in the sizeable gaps left by Xenophon. Because of this, most of Diodorus’ account has been disregarded due its various inconsistencies with the *Hellenica*.437

The plain of Leuctra is a wide, generally level, stretch of ground bordered to the south by Mt. Korombili, where the Spartan army camped, and to the north, where the Boeotians camped, by a series of low hills, which lie somewhat less than two kilometres north of the lower slopes of Korombili. The plain is open and without trees, making it ideal for a large-scale pitched battle with plenty of space for cavalry manoeuvres, though Buckler notes that the ground has risen slightly and modern farming has made the surface more level than it probably was in antiquity. Today the reconstructed battle monument stands in the plain, just north of Korombili, and a little under a kilometre northwest of modern Lefktra.438

After a night of rest, on the morning of the fifth of the Attic month, Hecatombaeon (Plut. *Ages*. 28. 5) or Hippodromius in the Boeotian calendar,439 both sides marshalled their

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437 Anderson (1970), 205-206. Polybius has noted that Ephorus’ account of the Battle of Leuctra is confused and fails to understand how the battle only occurred between one section of the opposing forces (Polyb. 12. 25. 3-4). This possibly explains Diodorus’ failings.

438 For the topography of Leuctra see Pritchett (1965-1969), 57-58; Anderson (1970), 195; Buckler (1980a), 61

439 Tuplin (1987), 77-84, has given the most extensive discussion of the date of the battle and concluded that it is impossible to be more accurate than asserting that it was likely to have occurred late in August. For the Attic and Boeotian calendars see Samuel (1972), 57-64, 66-70.
soldiers for battle. Plutarch says that the Spartan army totalled 10,000 hoplites and 1,000 cavalry (Plut. Pel. 20. 1), which included four Lacedaimonian regiments probably numbering slightly more than 2,000 altogether (Xen. Hell. 6. 1. 1). Of these, there were about 700 Spartiates (Xen. Hell. 6. 4. 15). Amongst their allies there were mercenaries led by Hieron, peltasts from Phocis as well as Heracleots and Phliasians adding to the cavalry contingent (Xen. Hell. 6. 4. 9). The Spartan army also apparently included some Arcadians (Paus. 8. 6. 2). On the Boeotian side there were, according to Diodorus, about 6,000 hoplites in total (Diod. 15. 52. 2), along with approximately 600 cavalry. It has also been estimated that the Thebans contributed around 2,000 hoplites to this total. Though none of these figures can be confirmed with any real degree of certainty, it is generally agreed that the Spartan force was likely to have outnumbered the Boeotians by about three to two.\footnote{Various attempts have been made to formulate a more accurate estimate of the exact numbers of soldiers present at the battle; however, the conclusions made differ very little from the figures given by both Plutarch and Diodorus, therefore it seems reasonable to accept these as plausible approximations. For some of these attempts see Busolt (1905), 387-449; Hammond (1959), 661; Pritchett (1965-1969), 58 n. 4; Anderson (1970), 196-198; Lazenby (1985), 152-155; Buckler (2013), 658-659. It must also be noted that the figures for the Boeotian cavalry are no more than plausible guesses. Though Frontinus provides numbers, which do not seem grossly disproportionate (1,600 on the Spartan side and 400 on the Boeotian), there is little reason to accept them on the basis of his figures for the infantry, see above, 104 n. 438.}

Epameinondas and the Boeotians’ initial strategy for victory is not altogether obvious as the course of the battle clearly necessitated a large degree of improvisation. But judging from the initial dispositions, some suppositions can be made. The Theban hoplites, who were by far the most experienced soldiers of the Boeotians, were situated on the left flank (Xen. Hell. 6. 4. 12; Diod. 15. 55. 1-2), contrary to the standard placement of crack troops. The remainder of the Boeotians would have made up the middle to right wing of the army, probably to a standard depth of between 8 and 12.\footnote{Roisman (2017), 293, asserts that Epameinondas must have extended his line to the right by either producing gaps between units or successively thinning the lines towards the right. While he may have extended his line (it would seem prudent to do so) we can in no way quantify the actual extent of this. Since the Boeotian right would avoid the engagement entirely it was not necessary to extend the army the full length of the Spartan line.} Conversely the left wing was constructed to an unprecedented depth of at least 50 (Xen. Hell. 6. 4. 12). Amidst these, he also assembled the Sacred Band, which was led by Pelopidas (Plut. Pel. 23. 2): they were
most likely placed at the very front of the Theban left wing.\textsuperscript{443} It is also made generally clear that the Boeotian force purposefully advanced at an oblique angle: the right side were ordered to avoid fighting the enemy, withdrawing somewhat, while the left would make a quick, targeted strike at the Spartan right flank. Something to this effect is confirmed by all three of the major sources.\textsuperscript{444} As for the cavalry, they were presumably initially placed on the left wing.\textsuperscript{445} From these dispositions it is more than clear that Epameinondas believed he could obtain victory by concentrating his force to attack the Spartiates, which, if defeated, would cause the remainder of the enemy to lose their nerve. As noted before, this strategy is perfectly demonstrated by his analogy with the snake.\textsuperscript{446}

Both sides had their own idea of how the battle would be won and because the Spartans’ plans ultimately failed, theirs is perhaps more obscure. An attempt to determine these plans is appropriate because Cleombrotus’ strategy dictated the reactions of the Boeotian army during the battle. Due to the tendency for hoplites to move their unprotected sides to the shield of the man next to them, the phalanx would generally drift to the right during its advance (Thuc. 5. 71. 1).\textsuperscript{447} In response to this, the right wing was usually where the crack troops were positioned: in this case, the elite native Spartan citizens. The standard Spartan tactic would be to attempt to gain the upper hand on their right wing; then, wheeling leftward along the side of the enemy’s left, they would outflank them.\textsuperscript{448} Cleombrotus appears to have been happy employing this classic strategy. He accordingly drew up his phalanx 12 hoplites deep (Xen. \textit{Hell}. 6. 4. 12), with the Spartan soldiers on the right flank (Plut. \textit{Pel}. 23. 1),\textsuperscript{449} which is also where he would lead the advance (Xen. \textit{Hell}. 6. 4. 13).

\textsuperscript{443} The suggestion that the Sacred Band was situated at the rear of the phalanx, made by Rüstow and Köchly (1852), 171-175, which was later supported by Anderson (1970), 217, has been reasonably refuted by most other scholars, see Lazenby (1985), 157; Tuplin (1987), 84 n. 43; Buckler (2008), 112-115.

\textsuperscript{444} Xen. \textit{Hell}. 6. 4. 12; Diod. 15. 55. 2; Plut. \textit{Pel}. 23. 1. Because of some evidence provided by later tacticians (Arr. \textit{Tact}. 11. 1-3; Ael. \textit{Tac}. \textit{Tact}. 47. 3-5), Devine (1983), 204-210, concluded that Epameinondas was the first to use the so-called ‘wedge’ formation; however, this makes little sense when considering the evidence of Plutarch and Diodorus and has been successfully refuted by Buckler (1985), 134-143.

\textsuperscript{445} Buckler (2013), 659, states that \textit{hammippoi} were included with the cavalry; however, there is no evidence that they were used by the Boeotian army until the Battle of Mantinea, see below, 317.

\textsuperscript{446} See above, 105.

\textsuperscript{447} This was not a deliberate manoeuvre but was sometimes used as an advantage for outflanking, see Ray (2009), 12-14.

\textsuperscript{448} Sekunda (1998), 19.

\textsuperscript{449} This is inferred by Plutarch’s assertion that the Thebans were targeting the right flank of the Spartan army. Anderson (1970), 201, has suggested that both wings were occupied by Spartans, which is asserted
Buckler has suggested that Cleombrotus could have suspected at least two things from the Thebans: firstly, as at Delium in 424 (Thuc. 4. 93. 4) and Nemea in 394 (Xen. Hell. 4. 2. 13, 18), the Thebans were now known for their unusually deep columns; however secondly, at these two battles as well as Coronea in 394 (Xen. Hell. 4. 3. 16), the Theban force would normally hold the right flank, just as the Spartans did. Also at Coronea, the Theban phalanx advanced ahead of their allies (Xen. Hell. 4. 3. 17). As a result, Cleombrotus seems to have intended on leading his phalanx to the right in order to outflank the Boeotian left.

The Spartan king’s use of cavalry is more puzzling: Xenophon says that they were placed in front of the phalanx but gives the impression that this was done at the very beginning when he was drawing up his troops (Xen. Hell. 6. 4. 10). Because they would have been in the way of the hoplites’ advance and cavalry were normally used to protect the flanks, there seems little tactical advantage in this decision. However, on seeing that the Boeotian army was concentrating their strength on the left, he reacted by attempting a rather complicated flanking move (Plut. Pel. 23. 1-2). Thus scholars have often argued that the cavalry placement was part of this reaction: in an attempt to confuse the enemy, he hoped to screen these movements by placing his cavalry in front of his army. This is certainly a rational reason for placing them in front of the phalanx and may be the only one; however, this interpretation is not specifically evident in the sources and Roisman has argued that the terrain actually favoured the placement. He also suggests that Cleombrotus may have hoped that the cavalry could be used to spoil the enemy’s phalanx. Though the king’s original intentions before the battle are not entirely clear, his positioning of the cavalry by Diodorus; however, the latter’s report that Archidamus occupied the left is generally considered erroneous, see Stern (1884), 136-137; Delbrück (1920), 157; Wolter (1926), 315-316; Buckler (2008), 116 n. 20.

450 See Wolter (1926), 311-312; Anderson (1970), 213-215; Buckler (2013), 661, 667. It should be noted that his use of cavalry in this way was novel, though unsuccessful, as we shall see.

452 My own assessment of the site is contrary to this: there was ample space to position the cavalry on the right wing of the Spartan force; therefore, no need to place them in front: personal observations in October 2015.

indicates that he was going to try and catch the Thebans off guard. Unfortunately for him, everything went wrong.

The battle began rather abruptly for the Spartans: apparently their horsemen were already engaged with the Boeotian cavalry by the time the phalanx perceived it was time to advance (Xen. *Hell.* 6. 4. 10-11). It is clear that Epameinondas interpreted the positioning of the Spartan cavalry as some sort of ruse; then, without further ado, also brought his cavalry up to the front ranks and ordered them to charge post-haste. The cavalry engagement must have occurred while the Spartan right wing was attempting to extend its line and prevented them from advancing any significant distance.\(^{455}\) Owing to the superiority of the Boeotian cavalry and poor quality of the Spartans’ (Xen. *Hell.* 6. 4. 10-12), the engagement must have been over fairly quickly. Accordingly, the Spartan cavalry was driven back into its own line (Xen. *Hell.* 6. 4. 13), thus severing the right wing from the left as it attempted its manoeuvre.\(^{456}\) Meanwhile, the Theban wing had probably advanced simultaneously with the cavalry, targeting its left toward the Spartan right. As Pelopidas perceived the extension of the Spartan right flank, he ordered the Sacred Band to detach from the main body and prevented them from establishing their position, most likely by using the 300’s greater manoeuvrability in order to attack the flank (Plut. *Pel.* 23. 2-4). Consequently, the Spartan attempt at an outflanking move was thwarted. Shortly afterwards the main body of the Theban left wing met the Spartan force in full and heavy fighting broke out. In spite of everything, the Spartans held out for some time while Cleombrotus fell, followed by several other eminent citizens including a polemarch named Deinon, the infamous Sphodrias and the latter’s son, Cleonymus. Eventually they began to be pushed back and the left wing of the Spartan army retreated as a result (Xen. *Hell.* 6. 4. 13-14).

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\(^{455}\) The opposing forces were only a little more than a kilometre apart, which Buckler (2008), 125 n. 56, covered in half an hour at a ‘leisurely’ pace. The Theban wing would have been quicker, marching at speed, and their cavalry could have reached the Spartans in just a few minutes. Because the monument is situated near the foot of the southern slopes, it is argued that this is where the right wing of the Spartans broke, see Pritchett (1974), 252-253; Stroszeck (2004), 305, 321-322; Roisman (2017), 290.

\(^{456}\) Buckler (2003), 292; Buckler (2013), 661, assert that a gap had already opened up due to the extension of the Spartan wing and that the cavalry retreat prevented them from closing it, but Lazenby (1985), 159 n. 22, is less certain of this and its significance. Either way, a gap was surely opened, at least when the Spartan cavalry was pushed back.
The Spartan army then fell back to their campsite on the southern slopes of the plain and fortified themselves on their position. Many of the Spartans, ashamed at their defeat, demanded that they prevent the enemy from setting up a trophy and reclaim their dead by another assault. However, the remaining polemarchs decided, on the weight of their losses, that it would be better to call for a truce. They accordingly sent a herald to the Boeotians, requesting their permission to recover the dead (Xen. Hell. 6. 4. 14-15). Apparently, in order to emphasize the scale of the Spartiate losses, Epameinondas allowed only the Spartan allies to gather their dead at first, thus what remained were the large numbers of Spartiate hoplites (Paus. 9. 13. 11; Plut. Reg. Imp. Apo. 71. 2/193b). The extent of the casualties on the Spartan side is numbered at nearly 1,000 and of the 700 Spartiates present, about 400 of these were killed (Xen. Hell. 6. 4. 15). This sits reasonably well with Xenophon’s other figure, stating that at least as many Spartans died at Leuctra as survived (Xen. Ages. 2. 24). Diodorus’ claim that 4,000 were killed on the Spartan side is obviously an exaggeration, but his figure of 300 for the Thebans is often considered to be reasonable (Diod. 15. 56. 4). Pausanias’ claim that only 47 Thebans were killed is, again, likely to be far too low, though Lazenby suggests that this figure may indicate the number killed in the Sacred Band. Having said that, Pausanias also states that more than 1,000 were killed on the Spartan side, which is fairly close to Xenophon’s figure (Paus. 9. 13. 12), a number also confirmed by Plutarch (Plut. Ages. 28. 5). Whatever the actual losses were on either side, it is clear that, as even Xenophon admits, the attempt to despatch as many Spartiates as possible was entirely successful.

Word was sent back to Sparta and arrived when they were celebrating the Gymnopaediae, which caused considerable distress amidst the populace. The ephors decided to send another army to support the now defeated force at Leuctra. This was no mere relief force either: soldiers from Mantinea, Tegea, Achaea, Phlius and other states were sent, alongside Spartans, Corinthians and Sicyonians manning triremes (Xen. Hell. 6. 4. 18). This was a large-scale mobilization intended to rescue the crippled force of Cleombrotus or perhaps even attempt to steal back a victory. At Leuctra both sides maintained their positions for several days, as Xenophon claims, the Boeotians sent word to both Jason of Pherae and the Athenians. While the latter responded with disdain, the former gathered his forces and

457 Roisman (2017), 296, thinks it is too high.
marched through Phocis to the plain of Leuctra. Once he arrived the Boeotians tried to convince him to help them finish off the Spartan force; however, wishing to maintain friendship with both sides, Jason convinced them to make a truce. Initially Epameinondas only allowed Sparta’s allies to leave. This action may have served to further sever the bonds of the Peloponnesian League, but the Theban finally conceded when he received word of the relief army’s approach. The defeated troops then marched homeward. En route over Cithaeron, they met the force being led by Archidamus, which then returned back into the Peloponnesus and disbanded (Xen. Hell. 6. 4. 16-26).

Epameinondas: The Revolutionary General?

Can it then be said that, at the Battle of Leuctra, Epameinondas employed revolutionary tactical innovations as had never before been seen in the history of warfare? Throughout the past 200 years most scholars generally and unfailingly agreed with this. Curtius eloquently summarized this point by explaining that the military developments for the battle were all specifically honed to deal with the Spartan way of war. It cannot be denied that Cleombrotus was taken entirely by surprise, especially with Epameinondas’ decisive use of cavalry and Pelopidas’ excellent attack with the Sacred Band. More recent scholars, to be sure, have continued to maintain this, providing various arguments to confirm their assertions. However, in response to such claims Hanson published an article in which he attempted to systematically prove that every single tactic used by Epameinondas and the Thebans in the battle had been done before in one way or another; therefore, no such innovations can truly be claimed. Following this, subsequent scholarship tended to either remain silent on the matter, or only briefly refer to it. But finally, after about 15 years of

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459 Roisman (2017), 297.
460 Curtius (1872), 393-395.
461 To name just a few, see Busolt (1905), 387-449; Adcock (1957), 89; Anderson (1970), 199; Cawkwell (1972), 262; Buckler (1985), 142; Ducrey (1985), 79-80.
462 Hanson (1988), 190-207.
463 Hamilton (1991), 205 n. 87; Stylianou (1999), 398, make reference to Hanson but do not state whether they agree with his arguments or not. Most recently Roisman (2017), 298 n. 32, acknowledges the debate but also makes no attempt to argue in favour of one side or the other.
464 Georgiadou (1997), 175, makes clear his opinion that Hanson’s arguments are not successful, but does not attempt to refute any of them specifically.
silence, Buckler made an attempt, in a lengthy footnote, to refute some of the claims made by Hanson.\footnote{Buckler (2003), 293 n. 56.} Unfortunately, although he makes valid points, his refutation is necessarily short and does not fully argue away Hanson’s conclusions. Even more recently, taking Buckler’s arguments into account, Hanson has further expressed his disagreement and asserted that Buckler misunderstood his point of view.\footnote{Hanson (2010), 114 n. 7.} Following this Buckler attempted a further refutation in more detail.\footnote{Buckler (2013), 657-670.} While this was done somewhat successfully, unfortunately Buckler’s untimely death has prevented any possibility to fully settle the matter any further between the two scholars. Thus, I have taken it upon myself to weigh each argument against one another in an attempt to come to some degree of conclusiveness on the overall novelty and importance of Epameinondas’ tactics at Leuctra.

The first ‘innovation’ that Hanson discredits is Epameinondas’ deployment of a wing 50 shields deep. As cited above, the use of an unusually deep wing was certainly nothing new and Buckler is happy to accept this, though he does point out that never before had such a depth been utilized.\footnote{Buckler (2003), 293 n. 56.} Buckler then later pointed out, drawing from all examples of the use of a deepened wing, that its most successful utilizations were borne out of necessity, not by the foresight of the armies’ generals, which was the case for Leuctra.\footnote{Buckler (2013), 664-666.} However, this fails to refute Hanson’s argument, who specifically questions the viability of a deepened wing. Though, as he argues, there are advantages offered by increasing the depth: enhanced confidence, increased momentum for the charge and “adaptability to the confining terrain”; there are inherent disadvantages. First, a large number of men would have been prevented from engaging the enemy at all; second, the shorter length of the phalanx would have increased the risk of a flanking attack. Finally, he believes there must have been a “saturation point”: after a depth of about 16 to 24 the proportional increase in the thrust of the phalanx would begin to diminish.\footnote{Hanson (1988), 192-193.} Hanson’s assumption is that an engagement of two
hoplite phalanxes involved pushing from almost all of the ranks; but, a more recent study has shown that this was improbable, as even in a depth of 8 to 12, the front ranks would be crushed by their own side. Van Wees has quite convincingly argued that the fighting and ‘pushing’ occurred only in the front two ranks of the phalanx. Xenophon, indeed, believed that, in theory, a phalanx with a depth of only two could withstand an army of any number (Xen. Cyrop. 6. 3. 21-23; 6. 4. 17). Though this scenario is unrealistic, an experienced soldier such as Xenophon could hardly have made such a suggestion if hoplite warfare involved massed pushing from the entire phalanx. What he suggests, in fact, is that only the first two ranks are capable of attacking the enemy; thus, in theory, without casualties, a phalanx only two deep could defeat a larger army of greater depth.\footnote{See van Wees (2004), 188-191.} What this seems to indicate for the Battle of Leuctra and other engagements where the Theban phalanx was of a great depth, is that Epameinondas was not trying to increase the strength of his charge upon the enemy, nor was he concerned with the length of the enemy phalanx. In this case, he must have been aware of the Spartan hoplites’ superiority and worried that the casualties on his left wing would have been too great to push them back. Therefore, he increased the depth, knowing that the first few rows of his wing were likely to be obliterated. If it is correct that there were 300 Theban dead out of approximately 2,000, with a front of about 40 in width, almost eight rows of the Theban phalanx would have been killed. If he had drawn up the phalanx to an average depth, the Theban line may well have been broken. Though this was not necessarily an innovation, the advantages of this strategy have not been fully realized by Hanson.

Second, Epameinondas’ positioning of the Theban hoplites on the left, thus specifically honing his troops to attack the Spartan right wing is often considered to be the most important ‘innovation’ that was first utilized at the battle.\footnote{E.g. see Cawkwell (1972), 261; Lazenby (1985), 162.} Hanson cites several examples in which similar strategies were employed.\footnote{Hanson (1988), 193-195.} At the Battle of Plataea in 479, the Athenians are said to have changed their position from one wing to the other, then subsequently moved back, in an attempt to pit their troops directly against the Persian soldiers (Hdt. 9. 46-48). However, this passage in Herodotus is generally considered to portray erroneous information, particularly as it glorifies the Athenian role whilst diminishing
Therefore, the exact nature and intentions of the ultimately unsuccessful manoeuvre cannot be determined. Then, at the Battle of Solygeia in 425, the Corinthians began the battle by directly attacking the Athenian right wing (Thuc. 4. 43). Again, Hanson’s comparison with Leuctra is somewhat misguided as the evidence implies that the Corinthians attacked the Athenian right, simply because they were the first to disembark from their ships. The engagement had not been planned; rather, the Corinthian leader, Lycophron, merely took the initiative to attack before the Athenians had properly assembled.\textsuperscript{475} Much later, in 382, when Teleutias led a force of 10,000 against the city of Olynthus, during the Spartan campaign to subdue the Chalcidian League, he positioned his crack Spartan troops on the left wing (Xen. Hell. 5. 2. 40-43). However, Buckler argues that, because Teleutias made this decision in order to attack the enemy as they spewed forth from the gates of the city, the left flank was the only “immediate line of attack”.\textsuperscript{476} Thus, he believes that it was an act of necessity. But it is clear that Teleutias calculated this as the best way to engage the enemy; therefore, in this case the decision to place the best troops on the left wing was surely pre-conceived, but the intentions were not (as Epameinondas’ would be) in an attempt to engage the enemy’s elite troops directly. The reasoning was instead a matter of the tactical implications of assaulting an army outside the walls of its city. Then in 375, at the Battle of Tegyra, Pelopidas achieved victory against a larger Spartan force by forming the Sacred Band up in close array and directly charging the Spartan right wing (Plut. Pel. 16-17; Diod. 15. 37. 1). Again, Buckler argued that, because of the nature of the topography, an attack on the Spartan right was the only option Pelopidas had.\textsuperscript{477} It must further be mentioned that Hanson states that Pelopidas placed his “better men” on the left.\textsuperscript{478} He has here made the assumption that there were more hoplites present than the 300 of the Sacred Band, making up a “right wing”.\textsuperscript{479} However, the evidence merely indicates that Pelopidas put what soldiers he had into close order in an attempt to attack at one concerted point. Finally, Hanson cites the Battle of Coronea in 394, where Agesilaus, after the initial engagement, led his right wing

\textsuperscript{474} See Macan (1905), 690-693; How and Wells (1928), 733-734.

\textsuperscript{475} Other than Buckler (2003), 293 n. 56, see also Lazenby (2004), 272 n. 38, who is agreed on this point. For the campaign as a whole see Shroud (1971), 227-247.

\textsuperscript{476} Buckler (2003), 293 n. 56. See Ray (2012), 44-45, for an account of the engagement.

\textsuperscript{477} Buckler (2003), 293 n. 56. See Buckler (2008), 87-110, for the topography of the battle. On the battle itself see also Sprawski (2004), 13-25; Roisman (2017), 283-286.

\textsuperscript{478} Hanson (1988), 194.

\textsuperscript{479} Though an addition of 200 hoplites may be inferred by Diodorus’ assertion of 500 epilekttoi (picked men). See Roisman (2017), 284.
against the successful Theban right wing in order to achieve victory (Xen. Hell. 4. 3. 16-20). However, as Buckler points out, for the initial dispositions both the Spartans and Thebans held the right wings of their respective sides. The emphasis of Buckler’s arguments on this point is that Epameinondas’ reasoning for the placement of his crack troops was wholly pre-conceived and not something improvised on the spur of the moment. Though his strategy was undoubtedly inspired by such battles as Hanson cites, unlike those battles (with the possible exception of Tegyra),\(^{480}\) he was here attempting to beat the enemy by killing as many Spartans as possible, hence the analogy of the snake’s head.\(^{481}\)

For the use of cavalry during the battle, Hanson has argued that the only novelty here was Cleombrotus’ unsuccessful attempt to screen his flanking move by placing the cavalry in front of the phalanx.\(^{482}\) Buckler initially agreed with him on this point, but stressed that Epameinondas merely took advantage of a golden opportunity.\(^{483}\) He must have understood that by routing the Spartan cavalry, their right wing would be separated from the centre. Hanson is correct that there is no indication that the Boeotian cavalry intentionally drove them into their own line; however, as he further points out, they had nowhere else to go. The inevitability of the direction in which the Spartan cavalry retreated should not detract from the success of Epameinondas’ order. He was well aware of what he was doing and showed the level-headedness of a brilliant general able to make quick and correct decisions without hesitation. Hanson cites other previous instances where cavalry units were successfully integrated alongside hoplite combat, such as at the Battle of Delium in 424 (Thuc. 4. 93), where the Boeotian cavalry from the right wing was sent to support the crumbling left. Other examples can be seen during Agesilaus’ campaign in Asia Minor such as at the Pactolos River in 395 (Xen. Hell. 3. 4. 23), where he sent his cavalry to lead the attack with the phalanx following close behind. Rahe, indeed, argues that Agesilaus was successful against Tissaphernes by his development of a combined use of cavalry, hoplites

\(^{480}\) Hanson has also missed the Battle of Olpae in 426/5, when the Spartan general, Eurylochus, attempted to outflank the Athenian right, by stationing himself and his men on the far left (Thuc. 3. 107-108). This tactic is actually very similar to what was employed at Leuctra, but at Olpae it was a failure since the Athenian general, Demosthenes, had stationed a reserve in a concealed position to the right, in order to ambush any flanking move from the Spartans. On the the Battle of Olpae see Pritchett (1985), 74; Roisman (1993), 28-30; Roisman (2017), 4-5, 150.

\(^{481}\) Buckler (2013), 663.

\(^{482}\) Hanson (1988), 195-196.

\(^{483}\) Buckler (2003), 293 n. 56.
and peltasts.\textsuperscript{484} However, none of these examples are quite the same as at Leuctra and, in fact, what appears to be the best example, which Hanson does not cite, is at the Battle of Tegyra: Pelopidas quickly sent cavalry in an attempt to hinder the Spartans’ advance and formation of their phalanx. Thus at Leuctra, Epameinondas displayed a similar level of tactical excellence: he saw that Cleombrotus was attempting some sort of manoeuvre to thwart the Boeotian attack, therefore he quickly sought to hinder their progress before his own phalanx could engage them.\textsuperscript{485} Novel or not, the cavalry engagement bore its own uniqueness that was different from any battle before.

This brings us to our final\textsuperscript{486} and what is probably considered Epameinondas’ most important innovation: the oblique formation. Buckler sees this manoeuvre as consisting of two separate innovations: first, the left advancing obliquely ahead of the right; second, the right avoiding battle by ‘refusing’ the wing.\textsuperscript{487} Hanson argued against the first by remarking that the oblique formation was an inevitable result of a deep left wing. That Plutarch recorded this and Xenophon did not was simply because the latter thought this would have been an obvious result of the Theban dispositions.\textsuperscript{488} However, the obviousness and inevitability of the oblique advance are not arguments against its novelty. Naturally if Epameinondas intended to maintain the standard rightward drift, he would probably have stationed his crack troops on the right. But by placing them on the left, the opposite direction was necessary. Admittedly, the only source that specifically states that the right wing refused or withdrew is Diodorus, whose confused account provides much suspect information (Diod. 15. 55. 2). But whether the right wing withdrew or advanced slowly, an oblique formation would have formed. In this case, it may be argued that Plutarch’s account implies that the right wing avoided battle as Diodorus explicitly says it did, though it did not necessarily move backwards. Hanson questions the whole scenario by asking, “Why would the Boiotians need


\textsuperscript{485} Buckler (2013), 667-668, further argued that it was Epameinondas who first placed his cavalry at the front, not Cleombrotus. This is possible though not the impression given by the sources.

\textsuperscript{486} There has earlier been some suggestion that the Boeotian right wing was refused as a tactical reserve unit: see Cawkwell (1972), 261; Devine (1981), 208. However, the use of reserves was far from novel and, since the right wing was deployed alongside the left and would indeed advance toward the enemy, they certainly were not reserves. Both Hanson (1988), 196-197, and Buckler (2013), 668-669, are agreed on this point.

\textsuperscript{487} Buckler (2008), 125.

\textsuperscript{488} Hanson (1988), 196-197.
to withdraw when they faced equally suspect, allied Peloponnesian troops opposite?” This question seems astounding for two reasons: one, the Boeotians were greatly outnumbered, therefore avoiding a head-on collision with the enemy was paramount; two, there is no evidence to indicate that the Boeotians had any real idea of the actual extent of discontent amongst the Spartan allies and they surely could not risk the entire battle whether they had become aware of this or not. Either way, the argument should be made on the strength of Plutarch, not Diodorus, and whether or not Xenophon deliberately omitted to mention the oblique advance or just assumed that the reader would understand this, Hanson makes no particular indication nor offers evidence that actually detracts from the fact that this tactic was completely novel.

If none of Epameinondas’ use of tactics can be said to be novel, should he not be considered an innovator of warfare? Of course, in reality, he should be. To deny this is, based on the evidence, utterly groundless. Yes, he was not the first to deepen a flank, place the crack troops on the left or coordinate a cavalry attack with the advance of the phalanx. Though the oblique advance was almost undoubtedly an innovation, if it was simply an inevitable result of his dispositions, surely, he still deserves credit for its debut. What, however, is his most significant contribution is actually the fact that his tactics were not novel, but that he developed them and combined them together in a way that most certainly was. The nature of his tactics at Leuctra are most appropriately described in Ward’s translation of Curtius: “Epaminondas, whose philosophical mind could not rest satisfied with isolated changes and inventions, now sought to develop a new system of tactics”.489 Thus, the various innovations that had been attempted throughout the previous century of incessant warfare were brought together in a manner that finally demonstrated that the Spartan army was by no means invincible, even in superior numbers.

489 Curtius (1872), 394.
Chapter 5
The Reduction of Sparta 370-369 B.C.

Aftermath and Consolidation

In the weeks and months following the Battle of Leuctra, almost all of mainland Greece went through significant changes during what might be termed as a hegemonic power vacuum. However, the true extent of Sparta’s downfall was not yet widely perceivable and it would continue to be a formidable threat to its enemies for some time.490 Probably within only a few weeks of the battle, Athens saw an opportunity to establish their defence against the potential threat of an invasion from Boeotia; thus, they invited ambassadors from all Greek states (excluding Persian held states) to re-ratify the Peace of Antalcidas. Unlike the peace from earlier in the year, this agreement included clauses for a defensive alliance; hence, all those who unlawfully attacked another state, should be subject to attack from guarantors of the peace. This, as most scholars agree, was an attempt from Athens to attain the position, which Sparta had previously achieved from the Peace of Antalcidas in 387/6.491 With Sparta apparently no longer capable of calling itself hegemon of Greece, Athens instigated this peace in a desperate attempt to raise its pre-eminence throughout the Aegean. Naturally neither Thebes, nor presumably any of the Boeotian cities were present at the peace, but the oath was apparently sworn by every other state with the exception of Elis (Xen. Hell. 6. 5. 1-3).492

Elis had previously lost ownership of Triphylia, as well as the towns of Margana and Scillus, among others, as a result of the Elean War in 402-400 (Xen. Hell. 3. 2. 30).493 As a

490 Kralli (2017), 2-5.
491 For discussion of the clauses and implications of the second Peace of 371 see Cary (1933), 86; Laistner (1936), 204-205; Hammond (1959), 494-495; Ryder (1965), 70-75.
492 Though not explicitly stated, there is some indication that the Spartans were present and accepted the terms, see Ryder (1965), 131-133; Sealey (1976), 423. Against this view see Hammond (1959), 495. Buckler (2003), 299-301, suggests that Jason of Pherae also sent an envoy but did not sign; however, there is no evidence for this and if it were true then Elis would not have been the only state, which did not sign.
493 On the Elean War see Bourke (2018), 151-170.
result of the Spartan defeat, they decided the time was ripe to reclaim their ancestral rule; consequently, they refused to swear to the peace (Xen. Hell. 6. 5. 2-3). This treaty also instigated further defiance against Sparta starting late in 371 and throughout 370. With the independence that was supposed to be officially guaranteed by the peace, the people of Mantinea decided to rebuild their city walls and re-establish themselves as a city-state.494 Agesilaus journeyed to the city as an ambassador and tried to convince them to put their work on hold; a proposal, which was sternly refused (Xen. Hell. 6. 5. 3-5). Sometime afterwards Argos became wracked with political variance wherein democratic demagogues led the populace against a faction of aristocratic oligarchs, apparently killing over 1,200.495 Meanwhile in Tegea, the faction of Proxenus and Callibius tried to convince the Arcadians to form a league,496 which would be led by a council called the myrioi497 and a standing army of 5,000 soldiers. Their actions led to civil strife against the faction of Stassipus. After Proxenus was killed in an engagement, Callibius fled to Mantinea, having requested their assistance. Mantinean soldiers were sent to Tegea and accordingly despatched Stassipus and any of his faction who remained in the city (Xen. Hell. 6. 5. 6-9; Diod. 15. 59. 1-4). 800 of the oligarchs managed to escape to Sparta and requested their support. The Spartans were delighted to have a pretext to put the Arcadians in their place and subsequently sent a force under Agesilaus. What followed was an eventful but ultimately fruitless campaign for either side, though Agesilaus declared that he disbanded his army without having been properly challenged by the enemy (Xen. Hell. 6. 5. 10-22).

494 Pausanias credits Epameinondas with instigating this (Paus. 8. 8. 10; 9. 14. 4) but, considering there is no other evidence for Theban influence in the Peloponnesus as early as this, it is generally considered untrue, see Stern (1884), 431 n. 2; Roy (1971a), 572.
495 Diod. 15. 58. 1-4; Plut. Praecepta 17/814a; Dionys. 7. 66. 5.
496 On the Arcadian League see Larsen (1968), 180-195; Roy (1971a), 569-599; Nielsen (2015), 250-268; Kralli (2017), 9-24. Like the Boeotian League, the newly formed Arcadian federation is often assumed to be democratic, but it is never characterized as such in our literature and a surviving inscription refers to decisions being made by the boule (IG V, 2. 1). It has been suggested that the league should be referred to as a 'moderate oligarchy' see Rhodes (2016), 63, cf. Rhodes and Osborne (2003), 156-161; however, as shall be seen, Arcadia made a habit of supporting democracies, which suggests they were democratically inclined.
497 It is often thought that myrioi literally means that the council was composed of 10,000 citizens. Some more recent scholarship has been more inclined to suppose that the term means something more general, like 'multitude', see Beck (1997), 80-81; Kralli (2017), 9. Because of this, the term myrioi will be used instead of '10,000'.
Meanwhile, because of the internal turmoil within the Peloponnesus, the Boeotians and Thessalians were given free rein to consolidate and expand their influences throughout central Greece. On his return to Thessaly, Jason captured Hyampolis, which was a strategically important city for passage between Phocis and Locris and into Orchomenus. He then demolished the defences of Heraclea, allowing him unhindered access through the pass of Thermopylae. From these actions, it seems more than clear that he was paving the way for an invasion of Boeotia (Xen. Hell. 6. 4. 27-28; Diod. 15. 57. 2). For the time being the Thebans needed to consolidate their dominion over Boeotia before thinking about expanding beyond their native borders. Thus, early in 370, Epameinondas was charged with subduing and reducing the inhabitants of Orchomenus. However, hoping to settle the issue more diplomatically, he managed to secure the city’s safety provided that they join the Boeotian federation, albeit with substantially less political power (Diod. 15. 57. 1). Buckler has noted that this move would have helped to increase the unity of the Boeotian League whilst preventing a potentially discreditable use of military force. The southern coast of Boeotia was also possibly fortified with watchtowers around this time from Chorsiae to Thisbae and Siphae, then Creusis.

Any designs that the Thebans had on the north were initially hindered by the presence of the growing threat of Jason of Pherae. After his calculated actions at Leuctra and subsequent military endeavours while returning to Thessaly, Epameinondas and the Thebans must have viewed him with a great deal of caution and suspicion. If it is true that Jason intended on conquering Persia (Xen. Hell. 6. 1. 12; Isoc. 5. 119), then subjugation of the mainland would have been an essential aspect of success for such an attempt as Alexander.

498 Diodorus also mentions a series of other revolts at Phialeia, Corinth, Megara, Sicyon and Phlius, all of which failed (Diod. 15. 40. 1-5). These are generally dated to around this period: Grote (1872), 189 n. 1; Stern (1884), 155; Beloch (1922), 174 n. 2, 4; Hammond (1959), 495 n. 2; Legon (1967), 335 n. 7; Cawkwell (1976), 77 n. 53; Buckler (1980), 291-292 n. 1; Buckler (2004), 303 n. 8. However, Diodorus himself places these revolts shortly after the Peace of 375/4. Some scholars prefer to accept Diodorus’ dating: Lauffer (1959), 318 n. 5; Roy (1973), 135-139; Hamilton (1991), 196-197; Stylianou (1998), 330-332; now also see Braithwaite-Westoby (2020), 265-270.

499 Buckler (1980a), 67; Cary (1933), 82-83. See Westlake (1935), 67-125; Sprawski (1999), 49-132, for comprehensive accounts and discussion of the life and career of Jason of Pherae.

500 The exact nature of this settlement is unclear; see Mackil (2013), 71-72.


502 Buckler (1980a), 66-67, cf. Heurtley (1923-1925), 40-43; Burn (1949), 319. A series of fortifications built along the southern coast are attributed to this period, see below, 244-249. It is quite possible they were built in reaction to Cleombrotus’ utilization of the port of Creusis.
the Great would later discover. Indeed, turmoil at home was the reason for Agesilaus’ failure in the east over 20 years earlier. With this ever-increasing threat from the north, Epameinondas’ consolidation and expansion of alliances throughout Boeotia was essential. He could not reasonably further his apparent ambitions of dismantling the power of Sparta when Jason had just cleared the pathway into Boeotia. Though there is no indication that the Thebans would have risked open battle with the Thessalians, the results could have been potentially detrimental to their newly attained position of power. Certainly, Jason appears to have been openly confident that his shrewdness and military experience would be more than a match for the recently discovered genius of the Theban general as Westlake argues (Diod. 15. 60. 1-2). On the other hand Westlake’s certainty in Jason’s military ability may be overstated as the latter was surely an excellent general, but there is no evidence that he had experience in large-scale battles comparable to that of Leuctra. But it must be noted that Jason’s overwhelming superiority, and apparently innovative use of cavalry, would have provided a distinct advantage over the Boeotians’ predominantly hoplite force.

In spite of this, Jason’s standing army of 6,000 highly trained mercenaries and the possible potential of drafting a further force of 20,000 hoplites, 8,000 cavalry and perhaps as many peltasts (Xen. Hell. 6. 1. 5, 19) would have amounted to the largest fighting force in all of mainland Greece. By 370, Jason had consolidated his reign and was in a strong position to muster such an army; hence, he appears to have been doing just that at the time of the Pythian festival (Xen. Hell. 6. 4. 30), around late August to early September. When news of this amassing sortie reached Thebes, the desperation of their situation must have dawned on them. Fortunately circumstances quickly changed for the Thessalians when, shortly after an inspection of his cavalry, Jason was assassinated by seven young men, who according to Ephorus were hoping to gain prestige from such an act, but according to others, it was at the

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503 Westlake (1935), 116-117.
504 Niese (1904), 115, asserted that Jason would have had no chance against Thebes; however, based on this passage in Diodorus in which Jason asserted his superiority over the Greeks and the inferiority of Thebes (θηβαίους δὲ τῶν πρωτείων ὀξίους μὴ εἶναι), Westlake (1935), 120, argued that Jason was aware of the instability of Boeotian unity, a fact, which he would have attempted to exploit.
505 Jason is credited with devising the rhomboid formation (Ael. Tac. Tact. 18. 2); though Arrian doubts this (Arr. Tact. 16. 3), Jason probably had great success in its execution, see Helly (1995), 204-208; Sprawski (1999), 110-111.
506 Sprawski (1999), 102-114.
507 Graves (1891), 81-82.
behest of Jason’s brother Polydorus (Ephorus FGrH 70 F214 = Diod. 15. 60. 5).\textsuperscript{508} Indeed, Xenophon states that the assassins were welcomed by many other Greek cities, a fact which indicated how fearful they were of Jason’s tyranny (Xen. Hell. 6. 4. 31-32). Because of the overwhelming good fortune and benefit this meant for Thebes, Tropea has theorized that the assassination may have been engineered by the Thebans, in which case the order could have come from Pelopidas or Epameinondas himself.\textsuperscript{509} However, as Westlake argues, there is no conclusive reason to make such an assumption, considering that there are several equally plausible possibilities.\textsuperscript{510} Despite this, such a scenario should not be ruled out and because the Thebans were certainly aware of the impending danger, it is not beyond the realms of possibility that they preferred to resort to unscrupulous dealings than face an army of overwhelming numbers.

Regardless of the motive behind Jason’s assassination, the Boeotians would certainly have been fearful of him and his death provided a massive relief from the danger of an invasion from the north. Making the most of the reprieve offered to them by the ensuing internal difficulties the united Thessaly must have faced, the Thebans quickly secured a so-called defensive alliance with Phocis and alliances with the states in Locris, Acarnania, Aetolia and Euboea, which notably defected from the Athenian Confederacy in order to join. Further north they established alliances with the Malians and probably the Oitaioi, as well as freeing the territory of Heraclea, allowing safe passage through Thermopylae. With the doorway into Thessaly open on several fronts, the Thessalians were also compelled into alliance with Thebes.\textsuperscript{511} All of this appears to have been achieved within the single campaigning season of 370. Buckler imagines an expedition led by Epameinondas and even plotted out the probable route in which he led his forces.\textsuperscript{512} Indeed, amidst the negotiations for these alliances Epameinondas was likely to have been integral to their implementation; however, there is no other intelligible evidence that a Boeotian army was led on a lengthy foray through central Greece at this time. Furthermore, the exact nature of these alliances cannot be determined with certainty beyond the fact that most of these states provided

\textsuperscript{508} This last assertion probably came from Diodorus’ chronographic source, see Stylianou (1998), 419-421; Parker BNJ 70 F214.
\textsuperscript{509} Tropea (1898), 65.
\textsuperscript{510} Westlake (1935), 100-102. See Sprawski (1999), 115-118, for the various theories.
\textsuperscript{511} Xen. Hell. 6. 5. 23; Ages. 2. 24; Diod. 15. 57. 1; Plut. Ages. 30. 1.
\textsuperscript{512} Buckler (2003), 297-298.
soldiers for the up-and-coming campaign in the Peloponnesus. Though the Phocians would later state that their alliance with Thebes was purely defensive (Xen. Hell. 7. 5. 4), it was not necessarily the case at this point owing to the obvious fact that they also provided troops for the campaign. As well as this, Xenophon refers to the Phocians on the matter of their relations with Thebes as subjects (ὑπήκοοι). This implies that the Phocians were, perhaps not violently, but forcibly compelled into submission by the Thebans. On the other hand, Buckler argues that, because Xenophon later admitted that the alliance was defensive, his assertion of subjugation was based solely on his prejudice towards the Thebans. Additionally, the temptation for booty may well have compelled them to join the expedition. Diodorus also describes the alliances as φιλοί, though his wording should not necessarily be taken at face value. Although we cannot ultimately conclude that all the alliances were defensive by nature, as Buckler does, it is likely that all of these states were compelled through practicality and fear into alliance with Thebes; an alliance which, does not appear to have been imperialistic but may have been influenced by the presence of a Boeotian army, possibly with Epameinondas at the helm.

The First Peloponnesian Expedition

The Spartan campaign in Arcadia led by Agesilaus probably started around late autumn or the beginning of winter of 370 (Xen. Hell. 6. 5. 20). Despite their loss at Leuctra, the Spartan reputation for military superiority had not yet been entirely tarnished; therefore, the Arcadians prudently sent envoys to find help. First the Athenians were asked, but they refused, perhaps feeling that it would breach their newly established peace treaty. The next choice, naturally, were the newly fledged slayers of the Spartan army, the Thebans (Diod. 15. 62. 2-3). The decision on whether or not to help the estranged Peloponnesian states was not a simple one and most likely not unanimous. An assembly can be imagined, in which the

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514 Buckler (2008), 134. Because of the later statement by Xenophon, it is generally agreed that the alliance with Phocis was defensive, see Scala (1898), 145.
515 As Athens had officially claimed hegemony of Greece with the recent peace treaty, this may well have been their chance to consolidate such a position. Demosthenes later noted that this was a mistake, allowing the Thebans to assume a superior status (Dem. 16. 12, 19). Modern observers have often agreed with these sentiments, see Cloché (1934), 97-99.
various pros and cons for a campaign were argued upon by various officials. It is more than clear that the parties of Epameinondas and Pelopidas strongly supported further military action against the Spartans, but there is good evidence to suggest that opinions were divided on the subject.

We know that Menecleidas, a Theban statesman, who later condemned Epameinondas for his aggressive policy (Plut. Pel. 25; Nep. Epam. 5. 1-6), was likely to have been present. Menecleidas probably represented the leader of a more conservative faction; thus, after the league’s recent successes and consolidation of their power, they were hesitant to risk all they had gained for the apparent sake of affairs that had no ostensible bearing on Boeotia. But Epameinondas was aware that the might of Sparta had not been entirely vanquished and if they managed to subdue the Arcadians, some of their former glory could be retained. As long as they maintained their dominance over Laconia and Messenia, they were still a formidable and potentially threatening foe. It is unclear if Epameinondas’ intentions of completely crippling the Spartans were introduced to the assembly, but at this stage it seems unlikely. He managed to argue that it would be beneficial to Theban superiority and success if the Peloponnesian powers were able to be effectively and permanently emancipated from Spartan dominance. It seems that Epameinondas and Pelopidas staked their reputation on their triumph as the other boeotarchs relinquished all authority of the army, giving responsibility to the two Theban statesmen (Diod. 15. 62. 4). To seal the deal, the Mantinians had borrowed 10 talents from the Eleans in order to fund the Boeotians’ march into Arcadia (Xen. Hell. 6. 5. 19). Thus, the Boeotian League once again rallied its troops.

Having concluded an alliance, the Thebans began preparations for the coming campaign. As noted, the Thebans mustered an army composed of the Boeotians and almost

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516 See below, 147-149.
517 Cawkwell (1972), 265-267; Buckler (1980a), 72-73.
518 Although no details of the alliance with Arcadia are mentioned here, Xenophon later offers some insight: no other alliances could be made without prior approval (Xen. Hell. 7. 4. 40); exiles were subject to extradition from all members of the alliance (Xen. Hell. 7. 3. 11; see also [Dem.] 17. 16; Just. 5. 9. 4). Though there does not seem to be conclusive evidence for a mutual defensive agreement, this is probable, see Buckler (1980a), 73-74.
all of their newly found allies.\textsuperscript{519} The Boeotians formed together a force of around 5,000 to 6,000 hoplites and, along with their allies, they marched into Arcadia near the middle of the winter of 370/69 (Plut. Pel. 24. 2-3; Xen. Hell. 6. 5. 20). The force that ultimately marched into the Peloponnesus has been estimated to have been as low as 15,000 to as high as 30,000 soldiers.\textsuperscript{520} When they arrived, Agesilaus had already departed, either unaware of the oncoming danger or simply under the assumption that the Thebans intended only to help in defence of Arcadia (Xen. Hell. 6. 5. 21). However, the Arcadians did not desire to let the Spartans get away without repercussions and they invited the Thebans to join them on a massive expedition into Laconia and march on the unfortified city of Sparta itself (Diod. 15. 62. 5). The Boeotian army in Arcadia must have been perceived by the Peloponnesians with a certain mystique, indeed, there is one anecdote in which Epameinondas allegedly refused to allow his men to dine with the locals as they would soon realise that the victors of Leuctra were just ordinary Greeks (Plut. An Seni 8/788a).\textsuperscript{521}

It is, at this point, worth discussing the actual intentions of Epameinondas. Various assumptions have before been made asserting that an invasion of the Peloponnesus was planned all along by the Theban general; however, though this cannot be ruled out, several points need to be stressed before any kind of conclusion can be made. The general assumption appears to be based mainly on the grand scale of the plans, which would henceforth be achieved by the army with Epameinondas as the commander-in-chief and his instant enthusiasm for the invitation from the Arcadians. But varying degrees of the scale of his forethought have been proposed: Grote, for instance, has asserted that he had been planning on the resettlement of Messenia and founding of Megalopolis before he had left Boeotia.\textsuperscript{522} Others more reasonably assert the probability that Epameinondas had envisioned the hope of some form of invasion into Sparta.\textsuperscript{523} And others take a contrary point of view, claiming that it was not until the army had arrived into the Peloponnesus that he made his

\textsuperscript{519} Xen. Hell. 6. 5. 23; Ages. 2. 24; Diod. 15. 57. 1; Plut. Ages. 30. 1.
\textsuperscript{520} See Lazenby (1985), 166, 203 n. 2; Hanson (1999), 79, 82, 425 n. 43, n. 46. The problem lies in the gap in the figures we have for the combined invasion force, but it seems fairly reasonable to estimate that the Boeotian allies mustered a force comparable to what the Peloponnesians would.
\textsuperscript{521} Despite the assertion of Hanson (1999), 86, this incident is anecdotal and cannot be placed in any particular chronological sequence with certainty.
\textsuperscript{522} Grote (1872), 202-205.
\textsuperscript{523} Curtius (1872), 428; Cary (1933), 89; Buckler (1980a), 74-75.
decision.\textsuperscript{524} Despite all of these relatively arbitrary opinions, very little discussion has been made in favour of one or the other.

Without coming to any outright conclusion, Hanson has offered some indications of Epameinondas’ prior intentions before marching into the Peloponnesus. As mentioned before, the stated intentions of the campaign were to assist the Arcadians against the Spartan army that was harassing cities in the central Peloponnesus. However, after Leuctra, Epameinondas was at pains to be convinced to allow the besieged Spartan army to return home (Xen. \textit{Hell.} 6. 4. 22-24). If he had had his way, he would surely have preferred to have dealt with the Spartan lion there and then. If that is true, then for over a year he must have been brooding the idea and planning his long-desired invasion of Laconia. It is said that Epameinondas was one for keeping secrets and remaining silent while others spoke (Nep. \textit{Epam.} 3. 2-3; Plut. \textit{De Recta} 3/39b). Hanson emphasizes that, if he had indeed been planning on the invasion, it was best kept secret from the army and even his colleagues considering it was the winter season. The logistics of moving a large army long distances at this time of the year would have proved difficult to overcome and the great number of farmers that were present must have joined the expedition only begrudgingly. If on the other hand, before they left, they had been aware that they would spend several months trudging throughout Arcadia and Laconia, along with thousands of other soldiers, pillaging, plundering and generally exhausting the limits of their stamina, would they then have agreed to follow? It is perhaps doubtful, or at least Hanson certainly thinks so.\textsuperscript{525} But these points only demonstrate the possibility of a pre-conceived plan and Hanson’s discussion is strewn with the interpretation of Epameinondas as a liberator from tyranny,\textsuperscript{526} which, though he inadvertently may have been, we have no real reason to assume that that was key to his motivation.

It is clear from Epameinondas’ conduct after Leuctra that he did desire to further cripple Spartan power and there is some indication that many were expecting an invasion from the Thebans (Plut. \textit{Ages.} 30. 1). Laistner has also argued that the Thebans would not have mustered so large an army if they had not initially been planning on attacking Sparta

\textsuperscript{524} Pomtow (1870), 83-84; Meyer (1913), 423-424; Roy (1971a), 573. Swoboda (1900), 2687-2688, is uncertain but cites Curtius’ assumption without argument.

\textsuperscript{525} Hanson (1999), 76-83.

\textsuperscript{526} For argument against Hanson’s views of Epameinondas see above, 9-10, 112-118.
and further suggests that, in the war conference that was held in Arcadia in which the boeotarchs were present, Epameinondas may have been the one who initiated the suggestion of invasion (Diod. 15. 62. 5). However, his argument seems to be contradicted by the political problems that faced the boeotarchs when they reached Arcadia. Whether or not, along with Epameinondas and Pelopidas, the other five boeotarchs were present, they faced a potentially fatal technicality from their Boeotian laws. As elected officials, they were required to relinquish their authority by the winter solstice. If then, they proceeded with an invasion further south they would be committing treason, the penalty for which was death. Despite this, Epameinondas did not wish to waste such an opportunity and managed to convince his colleagues to agree to the invasion by claiming full responsibility for any repercussions from the Boeotian assembly. When considering this evidence, if a prolonged campaign had before been envisioned by the assembly, surely allowances for an extended term of office would have been discussed. Furthermore, Xenophon specifically notes that the Boeotian leaders had to be convinced to join the expedition as they were preparing to leave when the offer was made (Xen. Hell. 6. 5. 23).

Given consideration, Laistner and Hanson’s arguments fail to convince and there are further reasons to think differently. It is very clearly indicated by the sources that the Thebans began their march into the Peloponnese while Agesilaus was still in Arcadia. Despite the winter season, their primary objective was to defend Arcadia from the Spartans. Therefore, it is likely that, when they left Boeotia, the most they could expect from the campaign was a battle in Arcadia against the Spartan force. Without knowing that Agesilaus would pull back homeward, Epameinondas could not have been certain that an invasion of Laconia would even have been possible at this stage. It is far more probable that he was expecting a follow up to Leuctra, which would be the ultimate decider in the war, especially if he managed to defeat Agesilaus himself. Therefore, it seems apt to conclude that, though the idea of an invasion had probably been deliberated upon by Epameinondas, the assertion that he had

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527 Laistner (1936), 206 n. 1.
528 Plut. Pel. 24. 3; Praecepta 23/ 817f; Regum 74. 23/ 194a-c; Nep. Epam. 7. 3; App. Syr. 7. 41. The sources are ambiguous on this matter. Either the boeotarchs relinquished their command while still in Boeotia, or they followed Epameinondas and Pelopidas into Arcadia and did so when the decision had been made to invade Laconia (Diod. 15. 62. 4), see Stylianou (1998), 425.
529 See Buckler (1980a), 75-76; Hamilton (1991), 223, for the political implications of the invasion for the boeotarchs.
been planning it all along is not indicated by the sources and it is far more likely that the Arcadians first made the suggestion. On the other hand, realizing that the campaign would otherwise have been a waste, the offer was snapped up by the Theban boeotarch without any concern for his own life. It is, however, plausible that he had previously imagined liberating the Messenians, if it is indeed true that he had used the Shield of Aristomenes at Leuctra.\(^{530}\)

Having rallied an army of around 40,000 hoplites alongside another 30,000 peltasts and camp followers,\(^{531}\) Epaminondas formulated the plan of invasion. Because this was the biggest internal Greek military sortie since the Battle of Plataea in 479 and the routes into Laconia were difficult, one could not simply lead a massive rabble across the mountains lightly. Epaminondas was aware of the difficulty. Apparently, intelligence suggested that all of the easiest points of entry into Laconia were fortified by garrisons. These included a force at Oeum, in Sciritis, of emancipated Helots and 400 Tegean exiles under the command of Ischolaus and another at Leuctrum, near Maleatis. He also considered that the Spartans would fight much more ferociously in defence of their homeland, just as his own men had done the previous year (Xen. Hell. 6. 5. 24). With a relative lack of topographical knowledge, the difficulty of resupplying such a huge force and the likelihood of having to fight the enemy in narrow passages, the logistics of the invasion must have been incredibly daunting as well as potentially catastrophic. In fact, because of the tremendous expense of supplying the army,\(^{532}\) if the crossing of the mountain ranges was prolonged beyond just a few days, the invasion would probably have had to be called off. Thus, it was absolutely essential to break through the Spartan defence as quickly as possible in order to live off of the enemy’s land.

Fortunately for the invasion force, people from the town of Caryae arrived offering to act as guides, seeing them across the mountain passes. In addition, word was brought of the dearth of Spartan soldiers, along with Perioeci, claiming that they would surely revolt if the army entered Laconia.\(^{533}\) Buckler suggests that the offer of Caryaean guides must have

\(^{530}\) See above, 98.
\(^{531}\) Plut. Pel. 24. 2; Ages. 31. 1; Diod. 15. 62. 5. Despite the doubts of Lazenby (1985), 203 n. 2, these figures can be believed when considering the large array of allies involved and that nearly half of them were peltasts or simply along for the ride, see Bauer (1890), 243-246; Hanson (1999), 425-426 n. 46.
\(^{532}\) Using the statistics in Engels (1978), 19-22, Hanson (1999), 84-86, calculates that they would have required, at the very least, 1,300 pack animals and around 680 tonnes of food and water every single day.
\(^{533}\) Xen. Hell. 6. 5. 25; Ages. 2. 24; Diod. 15. 63. 1.
been the most convincing factor leading to the decision for invasion. Everything depended on successfully entering Laconia. Once they reached Caryae itself, the town would boost their water and food supply as well as providing a juncture with a path leading from Asea to Sciritis. If they reached Caryae quickly enough, the Spartans would have to fight the Thebans within their own territory. The disaffection of the Perioeci and the Helots must surely have bolstered their confidence. It was becoming abundantly apparent that the Spartans would struggle to mount a defence with a sufficient enough manpower to stop the invasion. Provided the crossing was successful, there was little else that could withstand a force of such immensity. It is more than clear that all of these factors influenced Epameinondas’ plan for the advance into Laconia.

Thus, he decided to divide up the army into four separate contingents. Each of these would take an alternative path on their advance over the ranges, ultimately rendezvouzing at Sellasia (Diod. 15. 63. 4, 64. 6). It was often a great risk for Greek armies to divide their forces over long distances. Hanson cites two examples: in 424 before the Battle of Delium, the Athenian generals, Demosthenes and Hippocrates attempted a two-pronged attack on the Boeotians by land and sea but failed to successfully co-ordinate their arrival and the divided army was easily dealt with (Thuc. 4. 76-77, 89-101). On another occasion, in 413, when the Athenians were retreating after the failed Sicilian expedition, the army was divided between Demosthenes and Nicias. Both forces became lost and were subsequently cut down by the Syracusians almost to the man (Thuc. 7. 80-86). However, on this occasion, numbers were in Epameinondas’ favour. He could split the army into separate units consisting of around 15,000 to 20,000 men, each of which was a force formidable enough on its own. Marching in a single unit would also be difficult to co-ordinate with such a great number of men; it was then, strategically sound to divide up the army. Taking all the major routes at once would prevent the Spartans from concentrating their forces at any one point and even if an allied force were held off at one pass, another successful division could

534 Buckler (1980a), 77, 293 n. 11.
535 Though Xenophon only mentions two divisions (Xen. Hell. 6. 5. 25), he later mentions the presence of both Eleans and Argives (Xen. Hell. 6. 5. 30, 50), therefore his account appears merely incomplete, see Stylianou (1998), 429-430.
536 Hanson (1999), 84.
then attack the defenders from the rear. The successful co-ordination of this massive-scale invasion was key and the guides provided by the Caryaeans must have been a most crucial factor for its success.

The divided forces left from Mantinea, probably at separate times. The Boeotians took the most direct route through the mountains down the road from Tegea, along the Sarandopotamus and into Caryae. The Arcadians went by way of Oeum, defeating the garrison there under Ischolaus, then, invaded the town of Sciritis. From there they rendezvoused with the Boeotians in Caryae. The Argives, marching from Tegea, crossed over Mt. Parnon, along the Astros-Sparta road. During their climb they also fought a Spartan garrison led by one Alexander, which included a group of Boeotian refugees. Diodorus describes the Eleans’ route too ambiguously for it to be fully ascertained but they may have followed the Olympia-Sparta road to the south-east past Pellana, leaving this road near the modern village of Kalyvia, crossed the Eurotas and reached Sellasia. Here, all four contingents gathered together and apparently burned and pillaged the town (Xen. Hell. 6. 5. 25-27; Diod. 15. 64. 1-6).538

The territory of Laconia had now been Infiltrated by a foreign army for the first time, according to the traditional view, since the Doric people were alleged to have settled there some 500 or 600 years before (Plut. Ages. 31. 2; Diod. 15. 65. 1).539 The grand army proceeded to march along the eastern side of the Eurotas, pillaging and plundering the countryside until the peaks of the Taygetus mountain range could be seen and the city of Sparta came into view (Xen. Hell. 6. 5. 27-28). Again, Hanson envisions an uproarious scene, noting that since there were no crops to harvest during the winter months, the army must have been targeting storehouses and livestock. They were perhaps freeing the Helots and Perioeci

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537 See Buckler (1980a), 77-78; Hanson (1999), 85, for further discussion on the invasion plan.
538 The roads between Arcadia and Laconia that existed and the ones taken during this expedition have been variously discussed, see Loring (1895), 52-62; Buckler (1980a), 77-79; Pikoulas (1987), 121-148; Stylianou (1998), 430-432.
539 The so-called Dorian Invasion is traditionally dated to around the tenth century; however, it is debatable as to whether an actual invasion occurred or, alternatively, the ongoing settlement of an outside culture spanning several generations. If the latter is true then Laconia had not in fact been properly attacked by foreign invaders since the fall of Mycenaean civilization some 200 years earlier, see Forest (1968), 24-27; Cartledge (1979), 75-101; Hooker (1980), 41-45.
as they went, adding to their massive entourage.\textsuperscript{540} For the Spartans this would have appeared to be the end of all things: apparently, the women of Sparta were uncharacteristically overcome with fear when they saw the oncoming smoke,\textsuperscript{541} which trailed the invaders as they marched (Xen. *Hell. 6. 5. 28*). Such was the enormity of the invasion that Theopompus referred to it as “a surging eruption of war” (Theopompus *FGrH* 115 F322 = Plut. *Ages. 31. 3*).\textsuperscript{542}

With the ensuing mass upon them the Spartans had neither the time nor the numbers to mount a defence on the open plains; thus, it was necessary for them to withdraw to the capital in a desperate attempt to defend the city and its inhabitants. Agesilaus organized the defence by deploying his soldiers around the most central (μέσα) and strategically commanding (κυριώτατα) positions of the city (Plut. *Ages.* 31. 3). Even with well chosen defensive positions, the numbers of Spartiates remaining to be recruited would have been perilously low, perhaps as few as 1,000: scarcely enough to defend the city against the onslaught. Because of this and the disaffection of the Perioeci, more soldiers were necessary for a successful defence. As a result of the desperation, Agesilaus decided to offer freedom to any Helot that fought in the defence of Sparta. The turnouts for this ploy were staggering: some 6,000 Helots rallied together, enough indeed to make the Spartiates nervous that they would turn against them.\textsuperscript{543} Fortunately for the Spartans, the mercenaries from Orchomenus came to their aid, along with troops from Phlius, Corinth, Epidaurus, Pellene, Troezen, Hermione, Halia and Sicyon (Xen. *Hell. 6. 5. 28-29; 7. 2. 2-3*). We can perhaps assume that most of these allies consisted of the troops who were involved in the recent expedition in Arcadia, which included Orchomenians and Phliasians (Xen. *Hell.* 6. 5. 10-21). Along with the other allies that joined them, arriving by sea via Prasiae (Xen. *Hell. 7. 2. 2*),\textsuperscript{544} the Spartans appear to have mustered a force of approximately 10,000 soldiers, which would include a large body of peltasts and some cavalry (Xen. *Hell. 6. 5. 14, 17*). It is perhaps also likely that Agesilaus built stockades at strategic points, as he would do some seven years

\textsuperscript{540} Hanson (1999), 86-88.
\textsuperscript{541} On Spartan women, see Blundell (1995), 150-158, esp. 157.
\textsuperscript{542} ῥεῖμα καὶ κλύδωνα πολέμου. On this see Morison *BNJ* 115 F322.
\textsuperscript{543} This level of Helot recruitment was unprecedented and more than anything reflects the desperate situation that the Spartan elite had been reduced to, see Lazenby (1985), 166; Cartledge (1987), 384-385.
\textsuperscript{544} See Wace and Hasluck (1908/1909), 174-176.
later.\textsuperscript{545} With well-established defensive positions, this modest force now had a good chance of preventing the invaders from overwhelming the city.

Because the Eurotas had swollen over the winter period (Diod. 15. 65. 2; Plut. Ages. 32. 2),\textsuperscript{546} it was too dangerous for Epameinondas to cross the river so close to the city. He then marched the army further south and crossed near the town of Amyclae (Xen. Hell. 6. 5. 30). Aware of the difficulty the enemy force would have fording the river, Agesilaus apparently sent out his troops to attack them amidst the disorganization caused by the crossing. At this point the sources differ significantly: according to Diodorus, the Spartans managed to inflict heavy casualties until enough of the army had crossed to encircle the enemy, which caused them to flee back to the city (Diod. 15. 65. 2-3). Frontinus and Polyaenus give similar accounts in which Agesilaus announced to the troops that an oracle told him to fight the Thebans on high ground. He therefore sent out a small force to entice the enemy to fight when crossing the river, drew them into an ambush and managed to kill 600 of them (Front. Strat. 1. 10. 3; Polyaen. 2. 1. 27). Plutarch’s account depicts a similar scenario in which Agesilaus waited for Epameinondas on the other side of the river, but he only offers highlights of the event (Plut. Ages. 32. 2-3). On the other hand, Xenophon seems to imply that they crossed the Eurotas unopposed (Xen. Hell. 6. 5. 30). Buckler accepts Xenophon’s account without question and Hanson is happy to relate the account, though is somewhat cautious. Underhill points out that it is hard to believe that Xenophon would have completely ignored a Spartan victory. The tradition of a fight at the Eurotas probably comes from Ephorus and Callisthenes. It is possible that the engagement itself has been exaggerated and, instead, was a fairly minor skirmish.\textsuperscript{547} However, it seems difficult to come to any reasonable conclusion when considering that Xenophon is the only one who mentions that Epameinondas marched further south before crossing the Eurotas: the others seem to imply that he crossed much closer to Sparta. Despite this these divergences have not attracted serious attention as Tuplin notes and are largely ignored in favour of Xenophon.\textsuperscript{548}

\textsuperscript{545} Buckler (1980a), 84, 294 n. 22. See below, 292-293.
\textsuperscript{546} From personal observations Hanson (1999), 88, has noted that although in summer the river is no more than a creek, during the winter it can swell to nearly four metres in depth.
\textsuperscript{547} Buckler (1980a), 83-84, 294 n. 21; Hanson (1999), 89; Underhill (1900), 262; Stylianou (1998), 433-434.
\textsuperscript{548} Tuplin (1993), 143 n. 63.
Upon crossing the river, Epameinondas marched the army toward the city of Sparta, proceeding to plunder the land as they went (Xen. Hell. 6. 5. 30).\textsuperscript{549} Again, at this point we have a divergence in the sources. Diodorus describes a rather large-scale assault upon the city in which the attackers pressed hard upon the Spartans but found it too difficult to successfully penetrate the strong defences and were thus recalled by Epameinondas after some casualties (Diod. 15. 65. 4). Xenophon, on the other hand, describes a scene in which the Spartans sent a small force of cavalry and 300 hoplites to the racecourse at the sanctuary of Poseidon Gaeochus.\textsuperscript{550} Here they ambushed part of the enemy army causing them to flee briefly before they stood their ground and encamped themselves, presumably on advantageous ground (Xen. Hell. 6. 5. 30-32). Plutarch does not mention any fighting at the city and both Polyaenus and Aelian relate a story in which Agesilaus wisely restrained his men from battle in order to focus their efforts on the defence of the hill.\textsuperscript{551} However, this divergence is not widely discussed with most scholars taking Xenophon’s side and, on the strength of the other sources, it is generally accepted that, because the city was well-defended and he could not entice the Spartans to rally forth for a pitched battle, Epameinondas did not actually attack the city itself.\textsuperscript{552}

Other than the prudence of avoiding a potentially bloody siege against a city made up of winding streets, there were alternative reasons that may have prevented Epameinondas from destroying Sparta outright. Buckler speculates that the Theban general never intended on completely dismantling Spartan culture. In fact, as he suggests, it was to the advantage of Thebes and all of Boeotia for that matter to preserve at least a semblance of their former glory. It was clear that the other Peloponnesian city-states were unpredictable in their bid for autonomy or power. Thus, in order to prevent an eventual threat from the likes of Arcadia in

\textsuperscript{549} The sources mention more conspiracies within Sparta in which Agesilaus had to quickly and cleverly despatch the perpetrators without due course of the law (Xen. Hell. 6. 5. 25, 30-32; Plut. Ages. 32. 7). On the magnitude of these insurrections see Cartledge (1987), 384-386; Talbert (1989), 36-38.

\textsuperscript{550} Underhill (1900), 262-23, asserts that this is the sanctuary mentioned in Pausanias to be near Therapne (Paus. 3. 20. 2); however, this would be strange as Therapne is nearly five kilometres east of the Eurotas and Xenophon says Epameinondas had just crossed over to the western bank. Either Xenophon muddled his geography or he is referring to a different sanctuary. Tuplin (1993), 143 n. 64, has also noticed this inconsistency and has perhaps come up with an alternative location.

\textsuperscript{551} Plut. Ages. 32. 5; Polyaen. 2. 1. 29; Ael. Var. Hist. 4. 8.

\textsuperscript{552} Buckler (1980a), 83-84; Swoboda (1910), 2689; Stylianou (1998), 434. Though Hanson (1999), 88-92, admits that the actual assault on Sparta may have come from a later tradition, he is happy to imagine it as fact.
particular, it was necessary to maintain a certain balance of power. This idea is illustrated by Polyaenus who describes Epameinondas’ response to being accosted for not capturing Sparta. He apparently argued that if he had destroyed Sparta, they would have to go to war with all the other Peloponnesians (Polyae 2. 3. 5). Similarly, it has also been suggested that Epameinondas’ intention was only to humiliate the Spartans, not to destroy them, as this would be enough to demonstrate Boeotian supremacy. Shipley has further noted that later events would show that the Thebans did not have the resources to garrison the area in any event and therefore allowing the Spartans to remain as a counterbalance for Peloponnesian power was a practical solution. On another note, Tuplin has asserted that the most likely reason for the withdrawal southward from the city was the arrival of the Spartan allies. He offers some fairly reasonable chronological considerations to prove his point. Xenophon further indicates that the allies had to slip past the invaders to reach Sparta and surely did (Xen. Hell. 7. 2. 3). Another point may perhaps be speculated: at the end of the Peloponnesian war in 404/3, the Thebans wanted to raze the city of Athens to the ground, a suggestion, which the Spartans refused (Xen. Hell. 2. 2. 20). The Thebans had received a rather bad reputation over the last three decades because of this fact. In order to create an image of liberators rather than conquerors, it was perhaps decided by Epameinondas to alter this reputation by sparing the conquered. In fact, he went a step further and allowed them to keep their autonomy. Rather than choosing a single motive, it may be best to assume that all of these factors were taken into consideration, particularly with the arrival of the Spartan allies. It was therefore not expedient to attempt to take the city of Sparta itself.

In an effort to compel the Spartans to fight them in open battle many of the invaders hurled insults and taunts at them, calling Agesilaus by name to come out and fight. Wisely, he responded by saying that when the occasion was suitable, he would risk everything in battle against them (Diod. 15. 65. 4-5; Plut. Ages. 32. 6-7). Epameinondas withdrew his army from the city. However, the invasion was not yet over and the army marched further south,

553 Cartledge (1987), 234-235, admits that this motive is perhaps not provable; indeed, the testimony of Polyaenus alone is not enough to make such a conclusion.
554 Roisman (2017), 302.
555 Shipley (1997), 344.
556 Tuplin (1993), 143 n. 65.
557 An example of this can be seen in the Plataicus in which Isocrates cites this occasion to further discredit the conduct of the Thebans (Isoc. 14. 31).
continuing to pillage the landscape. They took the road to Helos and the port of Gythium. Along the way they sacked and burned every township they came across. When they reached the mouth of the Eurotas, the road forked at this point, east to Helos and west to Gythium, marching along the southern shoreline of the Peloponnesus. Once at the old Spartan port, Epameinondas proceeded to besiege it for three days (Xen. Hell. 6. 5. 32). Because the port had been sacked by the Athenian Tolimides in 455 (Paus. 1. 27. 5), it is likely that the town had since been fortified, which would make sense considering how long the siege lasted. An anecdote in Polyaeus tells of how the Thebans occupied the town, then three days later Isidas, the son of Phoebidas, ousted the garrison, which had been left there (Polyaeus. 2. 9. 1). However, the story of Isidas appears to be a replication of a later scene in 362 at Sparta (Plut. Ages. 34. 6-8; Ael. Var. Hist. 6. 3). Thus, it is perhaps unwise to use his testimony as evidence that Epameinondas was successful in capturing the port. Furthermore, Buckler has noted that Xenophon’s use of an imperfect verb (προσέβαλλον) to describe the attack indicates that the siege was not completed and therefore unsuccessful. During this leg of the invasion it is said that many of the Perioeci joined in the fight, having been liberated by the army of Epameinondas (Xen. Hell. 6. 5. 32).

After a lengthy campaign in Laconia, the Theban general decided it was best to leave the now thoroughly ravaged land. The principal reasons for withdrawing at this point are often argued alongside the reasons for leaving the city unscathed; however, different factors underlie both situations and it is important not to conflate one event with another. According to the sources the key reasons for the army’s ultimate withdrawal from Laconia are: one, the Peloponnesian allies had begun to disband owing to winter weariness and an overload of plunder; two, supplies were running low as practically the entire landscape had either been plundered or burned; three, it was winter and storms had descended upon them. Plutarch also cites Theopompus who claimed that Agesilaus bribed the Thebans with 10

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558 For the road to Gythium see Leake (1830b), 36-37; Roy (1961), 206-215; Buckler (1980a), 84-85.  
559 As Fermor (1958), 304, does, though admittedly this is not a scholarly work. Hanson (1999), 93, asserts that the dockyards were ruined, but, while Xenophon states that the dockyards (νεώρια) were attacked, he does not specify the extent of any damage.  
560 Buckler (1980a), 85, 294 n. 23.  
561 Hanson (1999), 426 n. 52, makes the mistake of associating the bribe that Theopompus mentioned with the withdrawal from the city of Sparta when Plutarch clearly states “ἐκ τῆς Λακωνικῆς” (Theopompus FGrH 115 F323 = Plut. Ages. 32. 8). Cf. Morison BNJ 115 F323.  
562 Xen. Hell. 6. 5. 50; Plut. Ages. 32. 8; Diod. 15. 65. 5.
talents for their expense to withdraw (Theopompus FGrH 115 F323 = Plut. Ages. 32. 8). This story is generally rejected and even Plutarch is suspicious of it as no other writer mentions it (Plut. Ages. 33. 1). All factors considered, Epameinondas had achieved most of what he intended to in Laconia. With a diminishing army and supplies he had no reason to remain there any longer. On the other hand, though we cannot know when the idea was first conceived or presented to the army, the second phase of Epameinondas’ plan was yet to be enacted: the re-foundation of the independent state of Messenia. He gathered up his remaining forces, probably mostly soldiers from central and northern Greece by this stage, and marched northward out of Laconia via the road to the plain of Megalopolis.

The Re-founding of Messenia

After almost 300 years (as the sources indicate) Epameinondas liberated from slavery and returned the land of Messenia to the people who had lived there in one form or another from as far back as the Dorian Invasion and possibly even the Mycenaean Bronze Age. However, in order to fully grasp the magnitude of this deed, it is worth considering a few aspects of Messenian-Spartan history. By the time of the first Messenian war, dated to around 743/2-724/2 (Paus. 14. 5. 9-10; 4. 13. 7), the Spartan state had already established itself as masters of Laconia and had coveted much of the plain of Makaria at the head of the Messenian Gulf, which lies south-west of Sparta beyond Taygetus. It has also been generally recognized that, by c. 750, a level of contact between Messenia and Sparta had been firmly established. At this time Messenia consisted merely of the Stenyklaros plain. From this it is clear that the Spartans had already begun to encroach upon the territory of the Messenians before the alleged disputes that triggered the war as Pausanias claims (Paus. 4. 4.

563 Shipley (1997), 348, points out that bribery is a common accusation in hostile accounts such as the alleged bribery of Sphodrias, see above, 78-79. See also Flower (1994), 199-202; Morison BJN 115 F323.
564 They were not likely to have marched over the Taygetus range due to the winter conditions, see Stylianou (1998), 434.
565 Or 730-710, according to conclusions based on the archaeological record, see Coldstream (2003), 162-164.
566 Cartledge (1979), 112-113.
567 Huxley (1962), 31-32.
The Spartan want for conquest and subjugation in the eighth century appears to have been largely due to the “relative overpopulation” in the Eurotas valley and, because they had successfully integrated the Laconian Perioeci into their culture, it was perhaps a natural step to look to their militarily inferior neighbours across the Taygetus. Other city-states solved their population problems by either over-seas colonization, which was not a common step for inland states, or internal colonization (as practiced in Boeotia, the Argolid and Attica), which was difficult given the nature of the Spartiate-Perioeci relations as well as the fact that the land of Laconia was not the most productive, agriculturally. Whether or not the initial triggers for war can be believed, they may in fact represent what was a growing animosity between the two territories, particularly as the Spartans began to expand their territory within the vicinity of Messenia.

Thus, while most states began to prosper economically via exchange with their colonized settlements, Sparta at the same time became vastly wealthier, but their wealth was primarily obtained from the conquest of agricultural land. Sparta had then committed itself to an almost exclusively agricultural economy and its future success and power was, as a result, inextricably linked to the subjugation of its Peloponnesian territories, especially Messenia. Though Sparta could and would certainly be daring in its endeavours, it could never make an outward step without ensuring the security of its assets back home. Because of this and the animosity that the Messenians had towards them, Spartan superiority was constantly treading on thin ice. This is clearly illustrated by the uprisings that occurred over the centuries including the Second Messenian War (685-668) and the attempts at uprising or escape in the fifth century. What these revolts always lacked was significant support from external city-states, which is exactly what was brought to them in the winter of 369. Epameinondas clearly understood both the fact that the Messenian Helots would take any chance of freedom and

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568 For a recent overview and assessment of the archaeological and literary evidence concerning the connections and distinctions between the people of Laconia and Messenia see Luraghi (2008), 68-146, who concludes that eighth century Messenia has the appearance of being entirely subjected to Spartan authority.
569 Cartledge (1979), 113-116.
570 Forest (1968), 38-39.
571 The chronology of these events has been disputed due to the apparent fallibility of the Olympiad dating system. Thus, the first Messenian war was now c. 600 and the second war in the late sixth early fifth century. See Shaw (2003), esp. 100-145; Bourke (2018), 69-76. In the end, dating these alleged events will always be tentative. For many more of the numerous attempts at chronology see Odgen (2004), 133 n. 14.
autonomy with gusto and that, without the economic support of the land, the greatness of Sparta would never recover.

On returning to Arcadia, Epameinondas compelled the remainder of his army to join him in freeing Messenia from its enslavement. It is not clear when he first announced this idea to the army or when he conceived of it, but it is likely that it had been part of his wider plan for Spartan oppression from at least the beginning of the invasion. Unfortunately, Xenophon’s pride or embarrassment on behalf of the Spartans has prevented him from even referring to this most significant event; therefore, we must rely primarily on the fairly vivid account by Pausanias. Accordingly, Epameinondas held a conference with his soldiers and the Arcadians and the notion was agreed upon by all parties involved (Diod. 15. 66. 1). The Argives also offered their assistance and bid Epiteles, son of Aeschines, presumably the leader of the Argive forces that went to Laconia, to follow the Thebans into Messenia (Paus. 4. 26. 7). As the greater part of the Arcadian soldiers had returned home, having taken as much loot as they could bear (Xen. Hell. 6. 5. 50; Plut. Ages. 32. 8), the Theban general led his still large army consisting of men from central Greece, as well as an unspecified number of liberated Laconian Perioeci and Helots. There is no indication that they were met by any hostility on their way into Messenia. It is likely that whatever Spartan defences were normally present there had been recalled for the protection of Sparta. With the knowledge of the oncoming liberators the Helots in Messenia may well have already ousted their local δεσπόται as they now had nothing to fear from Spartan reprisals.

In order to found a new city-state Epameinondas needed two things: people to populate it and a site for the new capital. The former task was by far the easiest. By comparison to the dwindling state of the Spartiate population, the number of Helots was vast. Hanson’s estimate of a total population of over 200,000 Helots in Messenia alone, as well as another 100,000 to 150,000 Helots and Perioeci in Laconia, may well be too high but they were still likely to outnumber the Spartiates by a great deal.\(^{572}\) Naturally the land would

\(^{572}\) Hanson (1999), 66, 423 n. 34. Most other scholars have been too cautious to give any specific estimates, although if the ratio (7:1) of Helots to Spartiates at the Battle of Plataea is anything to go by (Hdt. 9. 10, 28-29), the Helot population must have been much greater, possibly reaching numbers in the low hundreds of thousands (Hdt. 9. 10, 28-29). See also Cartledge (1979), 175-177, 307-12; Cartledge (1987), 37-40, 160-175; Lazenby (1985), 56-62. Alternatively, a more recent study has concluded that the
require a large population to be able to defend itself if Sparta ever attempted to take arms against it, thus he also invited the refugee Perioeci and Helots from Laconia to take resident in Messenia as full citizens (Diod. 15. 66. 1). He also sent word to all of the Messenians who had settled in various places including Italy, Sicily and Euesperitae. This was apparently well received and acted upon with enthusiasm (Paus. 4. 26. 5). There is some contention as to the extent of the returned Messenian exiles, local Messenian Helots and Laconian Helots and Perioeci. It may be that the predominant population of the new Messenian state were of the latter two ethne, which would later be a cause of complaint for the Spartans (Isoc. 6. 28), arguing that it was a simple matter between slave and master as opposed to the return home of a long-lost culture. For Epameinondas, however, the exact ethnicity of the inhabitants of new Messenia was not important. Instead the propaganda behind such a claim would be enough for the deed to impress upon the rest of the Greek world. Either way, the indication we are given is that, once word had been sent out, the population quickly grew from a rapid flow of immigrants.

The location of the new capital required even more careful thought. The site needed to be easily defensible as it would be the major stronghold against attacks from east of the Taygetus. It would also need to adhere to the inhabitants’, albeit small, cultural affinities. Pausanias’ account describes how Epameinondas chose the site. In a dream, an old man, appearing as a priest of Demeter, bid him to restore Messenia to its people for which, in exchange, he would be given undying glory. Subsequently, Epiteles also experienced a similar apparition in which he was told to dig on Mt. Ithome wherever he found Yew and Myrtle in order to rescue the old woman (ἀνασάσσαι τήν γραῦν). Piously obeying the dream, Epiteles proceeded to dig on the mountain and found a copper urn. Bringing this to Epameinondas, the latter looked inside and found a thin sheet of tin, inscribed with the mysteries of the great goddesses. This is said to have been the deposit (παρακαταθήκη) of Helot population of Messenia at the time of the invasion was relatively low, see Figueira (2003), 227, though it must still have numbered in the high tens of thousands.

573 Luraghi (2008), 209-230, notes that there are two separate ideals on how the new Messenians were perceived: one, the Spartans saw them as stolen property that bore no connection with the more ancient civilization; two, the Thebans claimed that they had returned the descendants of the original Messenians. Either view is derived from separate political agendas in which both sides attempted to justify their actions; therefore, neither view can be used as evidence for the exact proportion of ethnicities in the resettlement of Messenia.

574 The archaeological evidence from the area appears to confirm this, see Davis et al. (1997), 483.
Aristomenes. Pausanias then relates a story of how two youths from Andania angered the Dioscuri because they killed some Spartans who were giving sacrifice to them, which caused their perpetual hatred of the Messenians. However, because of the dream of Epameinondas they would hate them no longer. It is said that when these inscriptions were discovered, priests wrote them down into books. Epameinondas also consulted oracles of Bacis (βάκιδι), which said that it was foretold that the greatness of Sparta would fall and that Messenia would once again be inhabited. Consequently, after making auspicious offerings to the gods, he decided to found the new capital on Mt. Ithome (Paus. 4. 26. 6-27.5).

Despite the spuriousness of some of the details of the account, the story may reflect Epameinondas’ use of oracles and dreams as propaganda tools, as he so successfully utilized at Leuctra.\(^{575}\) In order to steer clear of any Spartan claim that the new Messenians had no right to autonomy, Epameinondas needed to secure divine sanction to justify his actions in the minds of people all over the Greek world. A story very much like the one recounted by Pausanias would have been ideal to spread throughout the populace, demonstrating the righteousness of the deed. Though it cannot be confirmed whether this was the actual story that was used, considering the fact that similar devices were used during the Leuctra campaign, we can perhaps expect that Epameinondas was likely to have employed them on this occasion as well. The political ramifications of this deed were even more significant than Leuctra and it was absolutely crucial that his actions were considered legitimate by the rest of the Greek world in order to prevent them from aiding Sparta to recapture the land and its inhabitants.\(^{576}\)

If that is the case, this evidence does not then explain why Epameinondas chose Mt. Ithome, but on brief reflection, there are some obvious answers to this question. If Pausanias can be believed, the local Messenians refused to resettle in Andania or Oechalia as both sites had previously met with disaster (Paus. 4. 26. 6). Andania, according to tradition, was the site of one of the original cities of Messenia, founded by Polycaon, a Laconian prince, and his wife, Messene, of whom the land was named after (Paus. 4. 1. 1-2). During the Second Messenian War, after the Battle of Deres (c. 684), Aristomenes persuaded the inhabitants of

\(^{575}\) See above, 96-100.

\(^{576}\) See also Swoboda (1900), 2689-2690.
Andania to desert the city (Paus. 4. 15. 4, 17. 6-10). Oechalia was also an ancient city, named after the wife of Melaneus, a son of Apollo (Paus. 4. 2. 2), which was also sacked according to a poem attributed to Homer (Strabo 14. 1. 18; Callim. Epig. 7). Because of the past failures of these locations to withstand attack, the locals felt it would be unwise to settle them again. However, it is doubtful that Epameinondas would have even considered these locations as they were around the northwest of Messenia, along the Arcadian border; hardly strategically sound places for defence against Sparta. Fortunately, a much better choice was available. After Andania had been abandoned, Aristomenes apparently led the remaining insurgents to Mt. Ithome where they proceeded to withstand Spartan attacks for 11 years (Paus. 4. 17. 10-11). Here was a site, which was held as part of the local Messenian Helots’ own proud history of revolt and would clearly be a good stronghold for defence against their former masters. As Buckler puts, because it “enjoyed a central position in the plain of Pamisos, Epameinondas chose it as the only logical site for the capital of the new Messenian polis”.

Before construction of the new city began, Epameinondas and the Thebans made sacrifices to various gods and heroes, especially to Aristomenes. Then, on the following day construction on the new walls began. Apparently, the builders worked to the sounds of Boeotian and Argive flutes (Paus. 4. 27. 7-8). The remains of this city are amongst the most impressive of all Classical Greek sites. The walls themselves were over four meters high with a thickness of up to two and a half meters. Along the walls were built over 30 towers, which rose over them about twice the height. They were built from un-mortared square blocks, which made up what would become a vast fortress. In Pausanias’ time they are still referred to as among the strongest fortifications in the Greek world (Paus. 4. 31. 5). It is likely that the design of the city was conceived by Theban architects. Hanson notes that such a spectacle, composed of tens of thousands of freed slaves hurriedly lumbering stones up the mountain,

577 See Cramer (1878), 146-147.
578 Buckler (1980a), 86-87.
579 Though it is uncertain how prevalent the stories of Aristomenes were by this period, his cult was certainly established by the restoration of Messene and a number of factors bear striking parallels between Aristomenes and Epameinondas, see Ogden (2004), esp. 38, 49-50, 56, 62, 90-92, 97, 106-108, 141-142.
580 The walls were constructed in the same emplekton technique that was used to construct a large number of fortifications throughout Boeotia from this period. See Luraghi (2008), 217-218. On the Boeotian fortifications see Cooper (2000), 151-191.
had not been seen since the rapid building of the walls connecting Athens to the Piraeus at the end of the Persian wars.\textsuperscript{581}

Hanson would be happy to assume the new government of Messenia was a democratic regime allegedly based on the Theban model;\textsuperscript{582} however, it is nowhere stated what the exact form the new government would take. Certainly, it is a plausible assumption: the country had been re-established by a potentially democratic society and democracy provided a stark contrast and purposeful disdain for Spartan oligarchy, which would surely have been one of the prime reasons for the Thebans to establish a democracy in 379/8, if indeed they did. The fact is, not only is it uncertain that the Boeotian League was actually democratic, there is no evidence that Epameinondas had any intentions for Messenia except that it become a powerful force in the defence of the Peloponnesus against a Spartan attempt at resurgence. There is also an indication that the original inhabitants of the new Messenia bore a strong connection with Laconian culture in spite of an apparent hatred for the Spartiates.\textsuperscript{583} As a result, though possible, we cannot assume that Messenia became a democracy, but we can assert that they were allowed to govern their land and people without the influence of a foreign power.\textsuperscript{584}

Once the deed had been set into motion, Epameinondas left a sizeable garrison to protect the city during its construction (Diod. 15. 67. 1), and gathered his remaining force before marching back to Boeotia. The reduction of Spartan power had been an enormous success, especially with the loss of the land and slaves of Messenia. Sparta would never again regain even a semblance of their previous hegemonic power, though not for lack of trying. Epameinondas had achieved in about four months\textsuperscript{585} what the Helots had failed to achieve over centuries of successive revolts. The walls of Mantinea, which were currently under

\textsuperscript{581} Hanson (1999), 99-101.
\textsuperscript{582} Hanson (1999), 96.
\textsuperscript{583} See Luraghi (2002), 45-69; Luraghi (2008), for in-depth discussion of Messenian identity.
\textsuperscript{584} See Robinson (2009), 138, who leans toward a more conservative government. See also Rhodes (2016), 63.
\textsuperscript{585} The entire length of the campaign has met with controversy amongst scholars ancient and modern (Plut. Pel. 24. 1; Ages. 32. 8; Proac. Ger. Rep. 23/817f-d; Diod. 15. 67. 1; Nep. Epam. 15. 7. 5; Ael. Var. Hist. 13. 42). It is, however, clear that it lasted several months, see Hanson (1999), 427 n. 55.
construction, Messene and the soon to be built Megalopolis, would all stand as fortresses against the Spartans. The danger for the Boeotians that had for many years been marching over Mt. Cithaeron, had been all but extinguished. For Epameinondas, to whom the safety of his people was paramount, the campaign would have been a crowning achievement, one, which he was willing to die for.

There is some evidence that Epameinondas had a hand in the foundation of this city also (Paus. 8. 27. 2). Most scholars dispute the authenticity of this statement but if, as Hornblower postulates, the construction of the city had indeed begun shortly after the Battle of Leuctra, late in 371, it is believable that the Theban general did indeed leave a garrison under Pammenes to help in its defence during its construction, perhaps on this very occasion when the army was marching back to Boeotia, see Hornblower (1990a), 71-77. Cf. Roy (1971), 578, who argues against any Boeotian influence and also see Demand (1990), 116-118, against Epameinondas’ own involvement.
Chapter 6
The Campaigns of 369-368 B.C. and political hostilities

Return to Boeotia

During the pillage of Laconia, the Spartans became desperate and were thus compelled to ask Athens for assistance. Athens was essentially the only major power left in mainland Greece that was not aligned with the Thebans and would certainly have been the only ones capable of combating them. A Spartan embassy was sent to the Athenians and gave several speeches in an attempt to compel them into an alliance (Xen. Hell. 6. 5. 33-49). There is some indication from the text that a Theban embassy was present with the intention of preventing the alliance, but nothing further is indicated about their arguments or who was present (Xen. Hell. 6. 5. 46). As a result of the delegation an alliance was concluded in which the Athenians were made the masters by sea and the Spartans by land (Xen. Hell. 7. 1. 14; Diod. 15. 67. 1).

Without further ado the Athenian assembly voted to send Iphicrates with a full levy of 12,000 men, who were to meet the Boeotian force as they crossed the Isthmus (Xen. Hell. 6. 5. 49; Diod. 15. 63. 2). Iphicrates took his troops to Corinth where he waited for a few days. After a while his soldiers became impatient, so he marched them up and down the Isthmus despatching the apparent strongholds that Epameinondas had set up earlier on their march into the Peloponnesus. When Epameinondas began the journey homeward, Iphicrates appears to have been in Arcadia and, though no detail is offered as to his actions, he was probably there in an aggressive capacity (Xen. Hell. 6. 5. 51). On hearing of the oncoming Boeotian force, Iphicrates pulled his men back to Corinth and established defensive positions

587 Since the phrase "νῦν δεομένους", as stated by Procles in relation to the Thebans, is in the present tense, it implies their presence at the Athenian assembly. Though Breitenbach (1876), 176-177, has expressed some doubt as to whether Procles was indeed referring to a present Theban embassy, Buckler (1980a), 295 n. 28, has pointed out that it is quite believable that they were in attendance because the Thebans would undoubtedly have preferred to prevent open hostility with Athens.

588 For the alliance see Stern (1884), 178-179; Ryder (1965), 75-76; Buckler (1980a), 87-88, 295 n. 28; Jehne (1994), 74-79.

589 As also assumed by Grote (1872), 226.
on the main road that went between the city of Corinth and Mt. Oneum. However, not intending to engage the Boeotians directly, he left open a convenient pass that ran from Solygeia to Cenchreae at the eastern side of Oneum, despite the enthusiasm of his inexperienced draftees (Polyaen. 3. 9. 28). As Epameinondas also had no desire to fight the Athenians, he was happy to take the route, which had been left for him. But, in a display of hostility and perhaps an attempt to hurry the Boeotians away, Iphicrates sent his cavalry contingent, consisting of Athenians and Corinthians, to attack the enemy in the rear as they withdrew. They apparently lost 20 horsemen in the skirmish and Epameinondas managed to drive them off towards Corinth.\textsuperscript{590} Xenophon criticizes Iphicrates for allowing the Boeotians to pass so easily; however, it appears that he misunderstood the Athenian’s intentions. Iphicrates’ task was to support Sparta, which was no longer in danger. He therefore merely attempted to coax the Boeotians out of the Peloponnesus.\textsuperscript{591}

After the highly successful campaign with very few losses Epameinondas, perhaps, should have returned to Thebes as a triumphant hero. It is even probable that the greater populace of the city received the returning soldiers as heroes because they had all but completely relieved them of any threat from the Spartan scourge. Unfortunately, many of his peers in the assembly had a very different perception of his conduct. Because the boeotarchs who went on the expedition had exceeded their office by several months, a crime punishable by death, their political opponents used this as an opportunity to charge them with treason. The trial is widely attested by the ancient sources and together, a single tradition appears to emerge. It is more than clear that Menecleidas was at the forefront of the prosecution and one can imagine that he probably gave a fiery speech condemning those who violated the law. In an attempt to minimize the threat to his political allies, Epameinondas had instructed Pelopidas and the other boeotarchs to ask for mercy in the court and persuade the jury that the impetus and blame for the crime lay only on him. Then when it came to Epameinondas’ turn

\textsuperscript{590} Xen. Hell. 6. 5. 51-52; Paus. 9. 14. 6-7; Plut. Pel. 24. 5.
\textsuperscript{591} Grote (1872), 227 n. 1; Buckler (1980a), 295 n. 30. Pausanias also seems to indicate that Epameinondas drove the Athenian cavalry all the way back to Athens itself as Jones (1918), 235, translates (Paus. 9. 14. 7). However, considering this is an improbability, the actual Greek phrasing, “Ἀθηναίων τὸ ἄστυ”, ought to be translated as: “the city of the Athenians”, which could be interpreted to be referring to the city in which the Athenians were occupying, i.e. Corinth, see Grote (1872), 227-228 n. 1. Curtius (1872), 435, believes Grote’s arguments are erroneous, though he provides no real attempt to refute them. Frazer (1898e), 54, does not believe Pausanias can be re-interpreted in this manner, in which case the latter’s account must simply be wrong.
to offer his defence he refused to answer the charges, admitting his guilt. Instead he merely requested that, if he was to be executed, they inscribe on his epitaph that they did so because he had compelled the Thebans to ravage the land which had been unravaged for 500 years; he had helped to organize the Arcadians into a league; that he had resettled Messenia after 230 years and restored freedom to the Greeks. The sentiments had the desired effect and the jury burst into laughter, apparently even deciding against the necessity of voting.  

The subject of this trial has undergone much debate by scholars largely due to the apparent mention of another trial by Diodorus, which he places after the second invasion of the Peloponnesus (Diod. 15. 72. 1-2). This is mainly because he omits mention of the first trial, whereas the other sources fail to mention the second, though there are possible references to it (Plut. Pel. 28. 1; Nep. Epam. 7. 1). Beloch, followed by Westlake, accept only the second trial while denying the historicity of the first. On the other hand, arguing against Beloch, Cary believes the trial must have taken place before the second invasion, but he does not accept the evidence of Diodorus. However, most scholars have accepted the existence of two trials, which, though with some dispute over the chronology, has been essentially proven by Wiseman and subsequent work on the topic.

The details of these arguments need not be attested here, but it has been generally established that both Epameinondas and Pelopidas had already been re-elected as boeotarchs for the year. The problem had arisen from the fact that they had not officially relinquished their authority by the customary time of the first of Boukatios, i.e. the first month after the winter solstice (Plut. Pel. 24. 2). It seems that the law entailed no specific provisions for the opportunity that arose for Epameinondas because a comparable situation had never before occurred in Theban history. Epameinondas was probably aware of the expedience and

592 Plut. Pel. 25. 1-2; Regum 71. 23/194a-c; De Se Ipsum 4/540d-e; Praecepta 3/799e-f; 23/819f; Ael. Var. Hist. 13. 42; App. Syr. 7. 41; Paus. 9. 14. 5, 7; Nep. Epam. 7. 3-5. The incident is also used by Cicero as a corpus vile for instruction in law court oratory (Cic. Inv. 1. 33, 38-39).
593 For the second trial see below, 167-169.
594 Beloch (1922), 181; Westlake (1935), 138-139; Westlake (1939), 13-14.
595 Cary (1924), 182-184.
597 See above, 128.
justification of his plight and saw good reason to ignore what was clearly an outdated law. Though he knew he was risking his life, he was also quite confident that the assembly would see his point of view once the campaign was over. However, out of the actual details of the trial that took place, two facts are entirely clear and are certainly the most significant: one, the issue did go to trial and those involved were facing execution; two, the case was subsequently thrown out of court without a vote. What this means exactly, as Buckler states, “Epameinondas had set a legal precedent”, thus the constitution would no longer necessarily condemn a boeotarch to death merely for exceeding their term.\footnote{Buckler (1980a), 138-142.}

In fact, some additional points may be made: if Epameinondas’ conduct had been universally controversial at the time, one may expect that the assembly at home would have sent an official emissary into the Peloponnesus demanding that the boeotarchs relinquish their command. Though the sources are not perfect, there is not a single indication that the Boeotian assembly was perturbed by the situation for several months until the army returned from the campaign. This may indicate that, in general, the assembly had decided to allow the army to complete its activities unhindered and then resolve the issue of the extended term when they returned. What then becomes clear is that everyone was aware that Epameinondas was testing the waters of an un-established legal precedent. The assembly back in Thebes understood that he was essentially completing his mission to protect Arcadia from Sparta, which of course was part of the ultimate goal of reducing Spartan power. However, the opposition party led by Menecleidas saw the opportunity to make accusations against their rivals and exploited the situation. None could deny that the boeotarchs had broken the law and the trial was unavoidable.

It is unlikely that Menecleidas and his followers were pro-Spartan as he had been involved in the liberation (Plut. Pel. 25. 3). It appears more likely that they were against intervention in the Peloponnesus and on this point the liberators had diverged in policy. Ostensibly, Menecleidas may now have had more than one reason to argue in the assembly. Considering his apparent skill in oratory and tendency to slander (Nep. Epam. 5. 1-6), he is liable to have made defamatory claims against Epameinondas. He may even have exclaimed,
in oratorical fashion,\textsuperscript{599} that Epameinondas had now established two more potential threats in
the Arcadian League and the new Messenian state. Furthermore, they were now officially at
war with Athens, which was a development of potentially catastrophic implications. Though
the former arguments could easily be cast aside, the latter was surely an issue that struck fear
into the Boeotians. Despite the apparent ease in which Epameinondas escaped the charges,
the number of opponents he had in the assembly must have increased and signified the
beginnings of his declining popularity, which would be clearly evident by the following year
when he failed to be re-elected as boeotarch. Apparently when he left the courtroom, his dog
came to greet him affectionately, which spurred him to exclaim, “See how it shows affection
to me for the good I have given it, but the Thebans, for whom I have often suffered, condemn
me to death” (Ael. \textit{Var. Hist.} 13. 42).\textsuperscript{600} Epameinondas’ responses to the charges may be
perceived as somewhat arrogant since he clearly believed he deserved most of the credit for
his achievements and appears contemptuous towards his own people for their accusations.\textsuperscript{601}

\textit{The Second Peloponnesian Expedition 369 B.C.}

When the invading army had departed from the Peloponnesus, in the spring or early
summer of 369 the Spartans again sent ambassadors, along with their other allies, to Athens
in order to establish the finer points of the alliance, which had previously been agreed upon in
haste. While the Athenians probably accepted Spartan claims to Messenia, the Spartans
doubtless recognized Athenian claims to Amphipolis.\textsuperscript{602} Although initially the assembly was
erroneous towards the traditional alliance of Athenian naval leadership and Spartan leadership on
land, at the last moment Cephisodotus convinced them that a shared hegemony alternating
every five days was preferable. Though militarily nonsensical, politically this enabled a sense
of equality between the two powers, particularly as the war against Thebes would take place
predominantly on land and, for the most part, the Athenians had very little to gain from the
alliance other than the prospect of minimizing and potentially defeating the Thebans who

\textsuperscript{599} Georgiadou (1997), 187.
\textsuperscript{600} τοῦτο μὲν ἑποδίδωσιν ἐφεργεσίας μοι χάριν, Θηβαῖοι δὲ πολλάκις ὑπʼ ἐμὸν εἶ ἐπὶ παθόντες ἕκριναν μὲ
θανάτου.
\textsuperscript{601} Roisman (2017), 304-305.
\textsuperscript{602} Buckler (2003), 312.
were undoubtedly the most powerful mainland state at this time.\textsuperscript{603} Meanwhile, after probably only a month or two of rest, the Arcadian League drafted another force of 5,000 hoplites called the ‘chosen’, which was led by Lycomedes.\textsuperscript{604} They again marched into Laconia and attacked the city of Pellana, which was situated on the Eurotas River nearly 20 kilometres northwest of Sparta.\textsuperscript{605} They successfully took the city, ravaged the countryside and massacred the 300 soldiers that had been stationed there (Diod. 15. 67. 2).\textsuperscript{606} The Argives also appear to have made a failed attack upon Phlius (Xen. \textit{Hell.} 7. 2. 4).\textsuperscript{607} Following these events,\textsuperscript{608} with the newly ratified alliance between Athens and Sparta and their respective allies, the Arcadians were ready to expect fresh hostilities. Not wanting to face them alone, they again requested assistance from the Thebans.

The request appears to have been positively received in Thebes and the assembly quickly voted that Epameinondas lead the expedition, though with ἄλλων βοιωταρχῶν, as usual (Diod. 15. 68. 1). Arguably there was little more damage that could be inflicted upon the Spartans; however, with the help of Athens, the remaining Peloponnesian allies still posed a significant threat to the Arcadians, Argives and Eleans. At this stage, a single decisive battle could even now prove the deciding factor in the war and the Arcadian League did not have enough troops to guarantee a victory despite the apparent military competence of Lycomedes. It was therefore still necessary for them to combine forces with the Boeotians in order to secure their dominance during the campaign to come. The Spartan allies included

\textsuperscript{603} Xen. \textit{Hell.} 7. 1. 1-15; \textit{Ways} 5. 7; Diod. 15. 67. 1; Isoc. 12. 159. See Buckler (1980a), 90-91. Stylianou (1998), 444-445, notes that the previous alliance concluded during the recent invasion should not necessarily be considered an official symmachia in which oaths were sworn. Although it seems clear that they had previously agreed that an alliance was certainly necessary, the assembly at that time should more correctly be seen as the debate on whether or not support should be sent to aid Sparta.

\textsuperscript{604} Known as ἐπίλεκτοι in Diod. 15. 62. 2, 67. 2. They are more famously called ἐπάρτοι in Xen. \textit{Hell.} 7. 4. 22, 33, 36, 5. 3. Some scholars have argued that the ἐπίλεκτοι and ἐπαρτοί were in fact two different units with the latter being much smaller than 5,000. See Kralli (2017), 37 n. 57, for an overview of arguments for and against.

\textsuperscript{605} See Cartledge (1979), 187, for Pellana, Laconia.

\textsuperscript{606} Diodorus provides the only evidence for this campaign, though a tombstone in Pellana bearing the name Olbiadas may be attributed to the attack (\textit{IG} V 1. 1591), see Cartledge (1979), 300; Stylianou (1998), 445. It ought to be noted that the death of 300 “Lacedaemonians” should not be considered Spartiates as such an incident would constitute a massive loss for the remaining Spartan citizenry. Perhaps the gravestone may actually be the name of the single Spartiate in charge of a Perioecic garrison and was killed alongside them.

\textsuperscript{607} See Roy (1971a), 572 n. 20, 573.

\textsuperscript{608} Further Arcadian campaigning in ‘Messenian Asine’ and Epidaurus, as recorded by Xenophon (Xen. \textit{Hell.} 7. 1. 25), is often thought to have occurred at this time between the two Theban campaigns in the Peloponnesus, see Beloch (1922), 184-185; Buckler (1980a), 92. See below, 175.
Sicyon, Epidaurus and Corinth, all three of which occupied significant harbours along the northeastern Peloponnesus, serving to block communications between Thebes and their Peloponnesian allies. Of these, Corinth was the most powerful and strategically significant, particularly as they guarded the access to the Peloponnesus and would have been fundamental in communication between Athens and Sparta. With Athens in the picture it became all the more necessary to secure the Isthmus and suppress the Spartan allies from effectively supporting the war effort. Taking these factors into account Epameinondas made Corinth the primary target for the second invasion into the Peloponnesus.\footnote{Buckler (1980a), 93-94.} The federal Boeotian forces thus began to muster.

Having become conscious of the oncoming invasion, the Athenians, also being aware of the strategic value of the Isthmus, sent an army under Chabrias in order to defend the passes and prevent the Thebans from entering the Peloponnesus. Apparently arriving sometime before Epameinondas, the Athenians joined forces with allies from Megara, Corinth and the Achaean Pellene, making a force of 10,000 soldiers. Before long the Spartans had arrived with troops from the remaining allies making a combined army of 20,000 (Diod. 15. 68. 1-2): ample numbers to defend the passes. The Isthmus offered both natural and man-made positions for a defence to be mounted. The stretch of land from the port of Lechaeum, on the Corinthian Gulf, to the city of Corinth and its acropolis, Acrocorinth, was fortified with two long walls, spanning nearly four kilometres. This made the entire northern pass essentially impenetrable without resorting to a costly siege. The circuit wall of Acrocorinth pressed close to the main road that led to Argos, which lay at the foot of Mt. Oneum, making this pass easily defensible from either side. The mountain itself stretches east from the road for about seven kilometres to a maximum height of 584 metres above sea level, on which only two of its eastern passes could sustain the passage of a large army: Stanotopi and Maritsa (west to east respectively). Finally, from the eastern side of Oneum is the pass that goes between the Saronic Gulf and the foot of the mountain, just over 300 metres apart. Thus, with only four available routes for the Thebans to choose from, the Spartan-Athenian force did not need to greatly divide their army up, particularly as the three most eastern passes lay
only about three kilometres apart altogether.\textsuperscript{610} The defenders then quickly began to establish wooden palisades along all of the passes, which were completed before the enemy arrived (Diod. 15. 68. 3; Front. Strat. 2. 5. 26).\textsuperscript{611} They then took up their defensive positions: it appears that the Athenians took the pass between Acrocorinth and Mt. Oneum, probably also placing troops along the coastal road. The Spartans, along with the Pelleneans, stationed their soldiers on the most assailable position (Xen. Hell. 7. 1. 15; Diod. 15. 68. 4). This is probably the Maritsa pass, which lies just east of the peak of the mountain.\textsuperscript{612} The Stanotopi pass, then, would likely have been occupied by the remaining Spartan allies.

Perhaps some time around July the Boeotian army had been fully assembled, consisting of 7,000 infantry and 600 cavalry (Diod. 15. 68. 1).\textsuperscript{613} When all was ready, Epameinondas led his troops toward the Isthmus. The main and coastal roads were probably too easily defensible for Epameinondas to even consider crossing them, whereas the pass of Maritsa, which crosses the mountain itself, would have been somewhat more awkward to defend, considering the slopes. The Spartan polemarch was aware of this, which is perhaps why he took it upon himself to occupy the pass. When the Boeotians arrived in the vicinity of Mt. Oneum, Epameinondas saw the position of the Spartans. Hoping to play on Spartan pride, he readied his troops for battle in an attempt to draw the enemy out and coax them into a pitched battle (Diod. 15. 68. 4). The enemy refused to budge from their advantageous positions; as a result, he decided to employ a different tactic. The army encamped some 30 stadia (c. five kilometres) away, presumably from the Spartan position. The sources seem to diverge at this point, but the testimony of Xenophon is generally accepted above the rest. Epameinondas waited until dark and calculated a march upon which they would reach the Spartan position by dawn. This they did and, in good order, successfully fell upon the defences at the changing of the watches, thus catching them off guard. What ensued was a

\textsuperscript{610} For the topography, fortifications and the passes of Corinth, see Fowler and Stillwell (1932), 97-105; Carpenter and Bon (1936), 44-127; Caraher and Gregory (2006), 327-356.

\textsuperscript{611} These were possibly instigated by Chabrias, see above, 79. Buckler (1980a), 296 n. 37, notes that Diodorus’ claim that the palisades stretched all the way across the Isthmus is very unlikely and unnecessary, considering most of the mountain was impassable. This wall is to be distinguished from the one that would be constructed a couple decades later during the war with Macedonia, see Wiseman (1963), 248-275.

\textsuperscript{612} Stroud (1971), 138-140, has reasonably deduced this position considering the fact that Epameinondas and his army are said to have actually climbed the mountain (Xen. Hell. 7. 1. 17-18).

\textsuperscript{613} As Thebes’ allies from northern Greece had less motivation to join on this expedition, we may presume that the sortie was entirely Boeotian.
brief one-sided engagement in which the Boeotians appear to have driven off the unprepared defenders with ease. The polemarch withdrew with the other survivors up the nearest hill in order to gain a better position against the attackers. From the new position, the survivors were able to block the Boeotians’ descent. Though they could not have held the position for long, Epameinondas was hesitant to assault the Spartan force frontally. After a brief stalemate, the two sides concluded a truce, which allowed the Boeotians to enter the Peloponnesus unhindered and the Spartan and Pellenean survivors could go home (Xen. Hell. 7. 1. 15-17).

Though Xenophon’s account is liable to be the most accurate, there are four other testimonies of the Isthmus crossing, all with differing details; because of this, they are worth some discussion. Pausanias claims that a battle occurred at Lechaeum between the Boeotians and the Spartans, Pelleneans and Athenians, under Chabrias (Paus. 9. 15. 4). His erroneous detail seems almost curious: on the one hand, he imagines a full-scale battle, on the other, he claims it occurred on the opposite side of the Isthmus. It is sometimes noted that his mistake is comparable to his previous assertion that Epameinondas chased the Athenian cavalry all the way to Athens (Paus. 9. 14. 7). Though it cannot be proven, his blunder here may also be based on a misinterpretation of his source. Lechaeum is, of course, one of the two ports of the Isthmus and the engagement itself occurred not far from the second, Cenchreae. It is simple enough to imagine that Pausanias’ source indicated that the event occurred near a port of Corinth. This may well have led him to the conclusion that it was Lechaeum, considering this is closer to the major road between Acrocorinth and Mt. Oenous. It is also possible that Pausanias’ imagining of the engagement as a real battle can be seen as a rhetorical device to glorify the protagonist of the story. Furthermore, the fact that he has some factual information, i.e. Chabrias and the presence of the Pelleneans, demonstrates that his source was not entirely without accuracy.

614 Xenophon criticizes the polemarch’s decision not to withstand the Boeotians as he believed they could have drawn reinforcements and supplies from Cenchreae (Xen. 7. 1. 17). However, this does not seem likely as Epameinondas’ troops stood between the Spartans and the port. From Epameinondas’ point of view, though the Spartans were outnumbered, they appear to have been in a position of strength, it was therefore expedient to conclude a truce rather than risk significant losses in assaulting their position. Indeed, the polemarch probably realized that the Boeotians would not allow them time to wait for allies: it was essential for the pass to be taken as soon as possible, even if bloodshed would result, see Buckler (1980a), 96-98; Roisman (2017), 306-307.

615 Swoboda (1900), 2692; Georgiadou (1998), 459. See above, 146 n. 591.
Polyaenus describes a scenario in which Epameinondas appeared as if he would attack immediately, therefore compelling the Spartans to remain battle-ready the whole night through. However, the Boeotians slept and attacked at dawn when the enemy was exhausted, easily defeating them (Polyaen. 2. 3. 9). Frontinus, on the other hand, reports that Epameinondas sent light-armed soldiers to skirmish the Spartan defences throughout the whole night. By dawn, both sides retired, then he brought forth the bulk of his army to attack the ramparts, which by this stage were largely undefended (Front. Strat. 2. 5. 26). Both of these accounts refer to a *strategem* in which the Spartans were made to be exhausted before being attacked by the Boeotians, though this is achieved in two different ways. Tuplin has asserted that the similarity between the accounts represents a common tradition distinct from Xenophon or Diodorus. A common tradition perhaps, but a common source is unlikely. The difference appears fairly significant: one actually indicates prolonged night time skirmishing on the Spartan position, while the other describes a situation in which the Boeotians only feigned battle readiness. Whether the idea of exhausting the enemy came from a single tradition is difficult to ascertain, but it is apparent that the anecdotes come from two distinct accounts of the engagement.

Diodorus asserts that the Boeotians attacked the defenders throughout the whole area and imagines a comparatively large engagement between the Spartans and the Thebans (Diod. 15. 68. 4-5). Again, Diodorus appears to exaggerate the full extent of the engagement, as is his rhetorical wont. It is also not likely that Epameinondas attacked the Isthmus defence on multiple fronts as the Greek seems to imply: κατά πάντα... τόπον. However, τόπον need not necessarily refer to attacks across a wide area, but instead may have specifically been attacks upon the Spartan-Pellenean position from multiple sides. Diodorus’ account has been ultimately discredited because of his assertion that the fortifications were constructed across the entire Isthmus and that he said the Thebans were outnumbered three to one. Despite his perceived inaccuracies, Diodorus’ claim that Epameinondas attempted to coax the enemy out to fight is seen as generally factual. If accepted, it may indicate some accuracy from the original source, perhaps merely misrepresented by Diodorus. In fact, in his account

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616 Tuplin (1986b), 46 n. 36.
618 Tuplin (1986b), 46. Though the number ratio may be a reference to the combined Spartan-Athenian force of 20,000.
of the engagement itself, other than a couple embellishments, κατά πάντα… τόπον is the only major divergence from Xenophon.

Pausanias, then, can be put to one side as his account provides no substantial information other than confirming the major players involved. Now if we focus rather on the similarities between the four remaining sources, several interesting connections can be made. First, they all emphasize that the engagement occurred predominantly against the Spartan position; second, Xenophon, Frontinus and Polyaeus indicate that the attack occurred around dawn; third, Diodorus and Frontinus confirm the use of palisades by the defenders; fourth, Frontinus and Polyaeus both refer to a stratagem in which the enemy were exhausted, which may relate to the dawn attack; and fifth, Xenophon and Polyaeus both specifically make reference to the Boeotians halting within the vicinity of Mt. Oneum, which also may relate to Diodorus’ assertion that they tried to compel the Spartans from their positions to fight.\textsuperscript{619} When viewed from this perspective the divergences between the sources do not appear as great and may indicate a greater reliability than has normally been presumed. Polyaeus and, particularly Frontinus, could have used sources that are more closely connected with a contemporary account, perhaps indirectly using the likes of Callisthenes, Theopompus or something similar; hence, Tuplin’s speculated common tradition. Though I would not presume that these claims can be made with any concrete assertiveness, we can at least deliberate on the possibility that Epameinondas used light-armed soldiers to distract the Spartans while the main force approached the palisades in secret, or even that they attacked the Spartan-Pellenean defence from multiple sides.

Once the Boeotian force had crossed the mountain, they quickly rendezvoused with their Peloponnesian allies: the Arcadians, Argives and Eleans (Xen. \textit{Hell}. 7. 1. 18).\textsuperscript{620} It is probable that they established a junction with them on the road to Nemea (Xen. \textit{Hell}. 7. 2. 5).\textsuperscript{621} From this point the combined army marched northwards into the territory of Sicyon. If

\textsuperscript{619} Though Polyaeus’ use of ὑπό with the dative seems to imply that they stopped at the very foot of the mountain, the fact that Polyaeus, Xenophon and Diodorus all describe a scenario in which the Boeotian army halted before the mountain in my view is a striking similarity.

\textsuperscript{620} During the campaign, Phlius was also attacked for a second time by exiled democrats with the help of the Argives and Arcadians, but the coup failed and the city remained oligarchic supporters of Sparta (Xen. \textit{Hell}. 7. 2. 5-9), see Legon (1967), 335-337; Roy (1971a), 374.

\textsuperscript{621} Buckler (1980a), 98; Hamilton (1991), 233.
the town of Phoebia can indeed be associated with the ruins of an ancient fortress on the western bank of the valley of the Nemea River, which lies just opposite Mt. Apesas.\textsuperscript{622} Then this may well have been Epameinondas’ first target (Paus. 9. 5. 14).\textsuperscript{623} If Pausanias’ unique detail can be trusted, they captured the town and discovered a large number of Boeotian exiles living there. According to Theban law, all prisoners would be ransomed off with the exception of Boeotian exiles, who were instead to be condemned to death. Fortunately for them, Epameinondas did not wish to execute so many of his fellow countrymen. As a clever alternative he simply gathered up as many of the exiles as he could and awarded them a new nationality before allowing them to go free. With a lack of any corroborating evidence it is difficult to accept the testimony of Pausanias by itself. However, the story is believable enough considering Epameinondas’ detestation at the killing of fellow Boeotians.\textsuperscript{624} Furthermore, if the position of the town is correct then it lay directly on the route from Nemea to Sicyon and would provide a useful stronghold against attacks from the south. Epameinondas’ actions were not only morally advantageous but were useful politically as well. Though some Theban aristocrats would have preferred that he adhere to the law, if he had condemned such a large number of his own people, the feeling back home would have potentially been that of shock and outrage. By freeing them he would have gained not only good grace from the people of Boeotia, but also from the exiles.\textsuperscript{625} It may be speculated that he allowed them to assume Sicyonian, or even Phoebian, nationality. These men then could have taken a position as the garrison defending Phoebia.

Epameinondas led the army further north towards the Corinthian Gulf, intent on capturing the city of Sicyon (Xen. \textit{Hell.} 7. 1. 18; Diod. 15. 69. 1). The people of the area had long been staunch supporters of Sparta, at least since the latter ousted the last tyrant of Sicyon around 550 (\textit{FGrH} 105 F1 = \textit{P. Ryland} 18).\textsuperscript{626} Since then, the city had remained firmly oligarchic and consistently provided large numbers of troops to help with the Spartan war effort. During the Corinthian war the Sicyonians lived under the constant threat of nearby Corinth, relying almost entirely on Spartan protection. Owing much to their continuous

\begin{footnotes}
\item[622] Ross (1841), 40; Frazer (1898e), 54-55. Though Leake (1846), 401, preferred to associate the ruins with the fort on Mt. Tricaranum (Xen. \textit{Hell.} 7. 2. 1).
\item[623] For Phoibia see Steph. Byz. \textit{Phoibia; Bouphia}.\textsuperscript{624}
\item[624] See above, 57-58.
\item[625] Gartland (2016), 94, 192 n. 40, has noted how unusual the assigning of new nationalities to exiles was.
\item[626] On this passage see Gambetti \textit{BNJ} 105 F1.
\end{footnotes}
loyalty to the Peloponnesian League, by the time Epameinondas arrived in the summer of 369, Sicyon had been run by a heavily pro-Spartan oligarchic faction that was not willing to relinquish control to the Thebans lightly. The city itself lay to the northwest of the Asopus River, at the foot of a hill on a triangular plateau, over three kilometres south of the gulf. On the hill by the plateau was the acropolis. Heading northeast towards the sea there was a plain of agricultural land, which ended in the port of Sicyon. Encompassing the city from the southeast and northwest two large walls had been constructed to defend the city from either side. The walls appear to have stretched out for much of the plain and probably walled off the entire city. Though the evidence is scanty, it is not entirely clear if the wall encompassed the port; however, the port itself may have had its own fortifications.

To reach Sicyon, Epameinondas and his army would have had to ford the Asopus, presumably several kilometres southwest of the city in order to cross unchallenged. Then, proceeding along the western bank of the river, they came within view of the acropolis. Since the city had extensive fortifications, Epameinondas perhaps decided that besieging the city would be too costly and time-consuming for the purposes of his expedition; thus, a *strategem* would again be employed. There is some evidence that a Sicyonian force joined in the attack on the city (Paus. 6. 3. 3), which, if true, gives us further indication of the political situation at the time: though the pro-Spartan regime was in control at this stage, the recent downfall of the Spartans had probably shaken their unanimous support. If a force of Sicyonians helped the attack on the city, this is clear evidence of an anti-Spartan or pro-Theban faction existing around the territory and probably in the city as well. With local support from within and without, the Thebans could devise a plan to take Sicyon with minimal expenditure.

After careful deliberation, the Theban officer, Pammenes, devised a cunning scheme in order to take the city. He took a force of Theban soldiers and acquired a large merchant vessel, perhaps with help from local Sicyonian supporters. A portion of the soldiers boarded the ship and disguised themselves as merchants before sailing for the harbour of Sicyon, while Pammenes advanced with the rest of the force by land. Once the ship had arrived at the

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627 Lolos et al. (2011), 65-68.  
628 Lolos et al. (2011), 182-187. Because Xenophon later tells us that Euphran fled to the port to escape and defend himself from the Arcadians (Xen. *Hell.* 7. 3. 2), it is likely that the port’s fortifications were separate.
port, they apparently fooled any sort of customs officer that they may have had and were allowed to remain overnight. When evening came, Pammenes attacked part of the city, which alerted all of the guards. The Theban soldiers from the ship at once attacked the undefended harbour and apparently took it with ease.\(^{629}\) Frontinus states that this incident led to the capture of the city (\textit{Thebanae naves et portum vacantem et urbem occupaverunt}), though he is not clear if the city was taken as a direct result of taking the port or whether it occurred afterwards.\(^{630}\) It is not entirely clear as to how the city was ultimately taken, but once the port had been, the Sicyonians may have lost their ability to replenish their supply reserves, which would have made it difficult to withstand a siege. As well as this, the port could have served as a base of operations for Epameinondas and he was then able to attack the city from multiple sides, which he may well have done. Either way, it is apparent that the city did not last long once the harbour had been taken. It was then incorporated into the Boeotian-Peloponnesian League; however, the internal affairs of the city were not tampered with and they were allowed to maintain their oligarchic constitution (\textit{Xen. Hell. 7. 1. 44}).\(^{631}\)

From Sicyon the army marched toward the Achaean city of Pellene, which lay about 15 kilometres northwest of Sicyon, some 60 stadia (nearly nine and a half kilometres) from the sea. It consisted of a small village with a sizeable hill fort just above (\textit{Plin. Nat. Hist. 4. 6}; \textit{Strabo 8. 7. 5}). Pausanias mentions a road that led directly to the port of Pellene, called Aristonautae (\textit{Paus. 2. 12. 2}).\(^{632}\) The city, as part of the Achaean League, had been democratic for most of the fifth century, but was subsequently reorganized into an oligarchy during the Peloponnesian War. Since that time the Achaeans, and Pelleneans in particular, had frequently supported the Spartans in their military endeavours. However, because the rest of Achaea at this time had avoided the more recent military actions inside the Peloponnesus, their loyalty appears to have been ambiguous. But without question the Pelleneans were still

\(^{629}\) \textit{Polyaen. 5. 16. 3; Front. Strat. 3. 2. 10; Aen. Tact. 29. 12.} The episode appears to be genuine as specific reference is made to it from \textit{Aeneas Tacticus}, who was a contemporary, though he adds nothing substantial. This, however, may infer that the story as reported by Polyaeus and Frontinus comes from a common fourth century source.

\(^{630}\) \textit{Lolos et al. (2011), 187 n. 24, places little trust in Frontinus’ account, but we do know that the city was taken at this time and it would make sense if it was a direct result of Pammenes’ ruse, considering this is the only extant story regarding the assault on the city.}

\(^{631}\) \textit{See Stern (1884), 185 n. 4, 186; Buckler (1980a), 98-99.}

\(^{632}\) \textit{For the site of Pellene see Leake (1830b), 4. 215-217, 224, 389-390; Frazer (1898d), 181-183; Anderson (1954), 74.}
providing significant support to the Spartans. By capturing Pellene, Epameinondas would not only have secured another outpost in defence against possible incursions from Achaean or Corinth, he would also secure a second port on the Corinthian Gulf. With the occupied forts of Phoebia, Sicyon and Pellene in an alliance with the Thebans, a large area would be secured under allied garrisons and the Spartans would be blocked from communication with their Achaean allies. The northern Peloponnesus would be all but removed from Spartan influence. We may presume that the Boeotians marched along the coastal road and first captured the port, which could not rely on the city for its defence being a considerable distance away. After this they were likely to have advanced upon the city either attacking them or attempting to convince them to surrender.

Unfortunately, the sources do not explicitly state the outcome of the attack (Xen. Hell. 7. 1. 18; Diod. 15. 69. 1), which has led some to conclude that they failed to take the city. On the other hand, Diodorus does not mention Pellene at all; instead he states that Sicyon and Phlius, along with other cities, were frightened into joining the Thebans. But we know from Xenophon that Phlius remained unoccupied and loyal to Sparta (Xen. Hell. 7. 2. 5-9). Because of this, Buckler has suggested that Diodorus must have mistook Pellene for Phlius, hence the mistake. If this is true, then Diodorus’ language implies that the cities, including Pellene, were taken. Though there is no conclusive evidence for either case, it may be asserted that Xenophon’s account of the invasion describes in detail only events in which the Boeotians were essentially unsuccessful, other than the crossing of the Isthmus, which obviously could not be avoided. He states that Sicyon and Pellene were attacked but says nothing about the outcome of these attacks. As we know that Sicyon was indeed taken, it seems likely that Pellene was also, as we could expect Xenophon to glory in a Theban failure to capture the city. In light of these considerations, I would argue that it is most likely that Pellene was successfully captured and, like Sicyon, was allowed to maintain its oligarchic government.

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633 For the history of Achaean Pellene see Anderson (1954), 72-92.
635 Buckler (1980a), 296 n. 40.
636 It should also be noted that the Pelleneans would also later appear on the side of the Thebans, albeit briefly (Xen. Hell. 7. 2. 2, 11), see Underhill (1900), 273.
Epameinondas then retraced his steps, marching the army southeast through the Argolid to the territory of Epidaurus. Its borders spanned from the Gulf of Argos to the west, the boundary of Corinth to the north and to Hermione and Troezen in the south and east. The city itself lay at the coast, on the southern arm of the Saronic Gulf, situated on a rocky hill of the peninsula of Acte, near the modern Palaia Epidaurus. The peninsula would have been easily defensible, particularly if the acropolis had fortifications. The inhabitants had been loyal allies of the Spartans at least since the Peloponnesian War and would continue to do so throughout this period.637 Marching across the countryside unhindered, Epameinondas failed to take the city because of its sizeable garrison, but caused great damage ravaging the landscape (Xen. Hell. 7. 1. 18; Diod. 15. 69. 1). Moving further to the southeast, the army then entered Troezen, continuing its molestation of the land. This city lay nearly two and a half kilometres from the coast on the Saronic Gulf and was situated on the northern slope of Mt. Phorbantion. The acropolis was defended by an encircling wall in polygonal masonry.638 Again, the Boeotians failed to take the city due to its large garrison, making a siege upon the city time-consuming and inexpedient (Diod. 15. 69. 1).639 Despite the failure to take both of the cities, the damage to their infrastructure would have been significant, as well as isolating the Corinthians from their allies.

After this,640 the army marched back northwards with the intention of attacking the city of Corinth. While Epameinondas had been conducting his campaign, Chabrias and the Athenian force seem to have fortified themselves in Corinth. Epameinondas led the army along the main road, which runs between Mt. Oneum and Acrocorinth. Before reaching the pass, they turned north before Acrocorinth and reached the path that goes between Acrocorinth and modern Penteskouphi, marching up towards the city. From this point the city descended into the plain up to the sea and alongside it, on an isolated ridge, ran the western

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637 For Epidaurus see Yalouris (1976), 311-314; Tomlinson (1983), 9-96.
638 For Troezen see Cristofani (1976), 936.
639 An inscription states that Troezen would later (368/7) send Athens two gold crowns as a sign of gratitude (IG II² 1425A col. 2 lines 227-231). Stylianou (1998), 450, has suggested that this might be evidence that the garrisons in both Epidaurus and Troezen were reinforced by soldiers from Athens. Buckler (1980a), 296 n. 41, instead argues that the gift was sent since Athens supported them against Argive raids after Epameinondas had departed. However, Jameson et al. (1994), 80, point out that these raids were in Epidaurian territory and do not appear to have involved Troezen.
640 Buckler (1980a), 101, has suggested that Epameinondas probably attacked Hermione and Halieis as well, considering they were also allied to Sparta. Indeed, Jameson et al. (1994), 80, have suggested that both of these cities defected from the Spartans at this point.
wall of Corinth, interrupted only by the Phliasian gate.\textsuperscript{641} It is not clear exactly how the Athenians structured their defence but it seems apparent that by the time Epameinondas arrived, they were within the walls of the city.

At this point Diodorus and Xenophon offer two rather different accounts of the attack on Corinth. Xenophon reports that the Thebans advanced with their army towards the gates, sending the Sacred Band (ἐπιλέκτοις) ahead with the hope of forcing an entrance before the gates were closed. The defenders rallied forth some four plethra (c. 120 metres) from the city and, using the high ground to their advantage, managed to drive off the attackers during a bloody skirmish of javelins and other missile weapons. They pursued them for a distance of about half a kilometre. Afterwards, a truce was made in order for the Thebans to recover their dead and the victors erected a trophy (Xen. Hell. 7. 1. 18-19). Diodorus recounts that Epameinondas brought his army upon the city and the Corinthians came out to meet him but were easily driven back towards the gates. However, when some of the Boeotians entered the city, the Athenians under Chabrias managed to drive them out again. Epameinondas then gathered up his force in full and attacked Corinth, but Chabrias and his men, fighting on superior ground, managed to kill many of the attackers and cause them to retreat (Diod. 15. 69. 1-4). There has been a tendency for scholars to either favour the testimony of Xenophon\textsuperscript{642} or to arbitrarily combine the accounts together.\textsuperscript{643} However, when viewed in parallel, it becomes clearer where each source’s respective faults lie and a better reconciliation may be attempted.

There are at least two reasons to suspect that Xenophon’s account is incomplete. The first and most obvious is that he does not specify the nationality of the defenders: on his description alone, we would have no option but to assume that they were solely Corinthian. Second, the motivation for the Sacred Band to rush ahead was to attempt to enter the city “if the gates happened to be open” (εἰ ἄνεσθημέναι τύχοιεν). Tuplin has argued that the local topography of the area should have given the defenders ample opportunity to sight the approaching army and close the gates well before they reached an appropriate distance to

\textsuperscript{641} For the western defences of Corinth, see Carpenter and Bon (1936), 71-75; Buckler (1980a), 99.
\textsuperscript{642} Eg. Underhill (1900), 273; Swoboda (1900), 2692;
\textsuperscript{643} Eg. Grote (1872), 246; Roy (1994), 192; Buckler (1980a), 99-100. It is normal to accept the presence of Chabrias and the Athenians, though Plutarch confirms these facts, as we will see.
charge upon the city. There is, then, little chance that Epameinondas would have expected the gates to be left open. However, as a resident of Corinth, Xenophon was likely to have known the full story and had little reason to misrepresent the facts, considering it was a Theban loss. Indeed, Xenophon seems to indicate the use of a first-hand account, considering his approximated distances and the detail that the defenders climbed on burial monuments to gain more high ground. This is surely a valid reason to trust the accuracy of the details he has provided; however, his failure to offer a logical context in which the Thebans would attack the gate may imply that he has only told the climax and conclusion of the battle. If he did not, in fact, recount the full story, this begs the question as to why. Tuplin has suggested that he wanted to emphasize a point about Theban-overconfidence and the effectiveness of the light-armed troops against the attackers. 644

The usual reason to accept Xenophon over Diodorus in this case is due to an anecdote of Plutarch’s. He states that, after the trophy had been set up, Epameinondas scathingly joked that they ought to set up a Hecate instead, which was apparently a common thing to erect in front of gates where three roads met. Epameinondas’ irreverence seems to indicate that he did not consider the loss a significant one, therefore not worthy of a trophy. Because Xenophon also describes the event as small-scale, Plutarch appears to confirm his reliability. Diodorus describes a large-scale battle, so must therefore be dismissed. However, unlike Xenophon, Plutarch does in fact agree with Diodorus on the presence of Chabrias, thus confirming at least one solid fact in his account (Plut. Reg. Imp. Apo. 71. 19/193f). Furthermore, there are two certain similarities between Xenophon and Diodorus’ respective accounts: first, both state that the defenders ultimately defeated the attackers by making use of higher ground; second, unlike Plutarch, who says only a few, both accounts specifically attest that many Thebans were killed in the attack. A further possible similarity is Diodorus’ statement that the Athenians were well supplied from the city. The word χορηγουμένων need not be interpreted as referring to supplies such as food since the attack was very brief. In fact, if we determine that he was referring to the supply of equipment or weaponry, it could be asserted he meant the supply of javelins and other light-armed missile weapons. If accepted, both accounts indicate the use of ψιλοί.

644 Tuplin (1986b), 45.
Now, when considering Diodorus, his primary flaw is in how much he exaggerates the scale of the battle. This, however, can be fairly easily explained due to the typically rhetorical nature of his work, as was seen with the previous engagement while crossing Mt. Oneum. He also provides several other aspects lacking in Xenophon, which makes up a fairly detailed account. Diodorus’ description of the battle can be divided into three separate engagements: first, Corinthian soldiers came outside of their gates to meet the Boeotians but were quickly repelled and were driven back to the city; two, the Boeotian soldiers pursued the Corinthians into the gates of the city and were met by Chabrias and the Athenians, who drove the enemy back outside the wall; three, the Boeotians rallied together to attack the city once more, but were forced to retreat due to the superior terrain of the Athenian defenders. When examining Xenophon’s account, his description is, essentially, entirely reconcilable with the third engagement. Diodorus may even serve to illuminate the faulty logic in Xenophon: after the Athenians had driven the Boeotians from the city and the former began taking their positions on the higher ground, the latter proceeded to make a rush for the gates before they could be closed. Although Diodorus surely exaggerates the scale of the battle, as it is likely that the engagements were all small skirmishes (perhaps involving primarily the Sacred Band), this does not prove that his general outline of events is erroneous, especially when it can be reconciled with Xenophon. Perhaps Xenophon simply did not wish to recount the initial success of the Thebans at the beginning of the battle.

Again, taking the expedient approach, Epameinondas instead decided to ravage the landscape; thus, completing his essential reduction of the wealth and strength of the Spartan allies. He accordingly split his army into groups and they roam the plain between the hill adjoined to the city and the sea, destroying and looting everything they could find of value while the Athenians and Corinthians did not dare venture to attack them (Xen. Hell. 7. 1. 20). In the meantime, the Spartans had previously requested support from Dionysius, the tyrant of Sicily. A force of 2,000 mercenaries was sent, consisting of Celts and Iberians, plus a

645 Stylianou (1998), 460.
646 See above, 154-155.
647 Now see Roisman (2017), 308, for a similar reconstruction.
648 For the close relations between Sparta and Dionysius see Stylianou (1998), 216.
649 Iberia usually referred to the eastern side of the Iberian Gulf up to either the Pyrenees or as far as the Rhône River in France (Polyb. 3. 37; Strabo 3. 4. 19). The Greeks often considered the Celts to be the Gallic people who lived in Southern France and would later attack Italy (Diod. 14. 113-117). But sometimes they
unit of some 50 horsemen. These reinforcements apparently engaged Epameinondas’ men in some skirmishing, for which Xenophon takes particular interest in the attack and retreat tactics used by the horsemen. Despite no obvious decisive success, the skirmishes may well have catalyzed the departure of the Boeotians, considering that the Spartans awarded the mercenaries some sort of honour or prize (τιμηθέντες). After a few days of ravaging Corinthia, and because the summer was drawing to a close, Epameinondas willingly disbanded his army and led the Boeotians homeward (Xen. Hell. 7. 1. 20-22; Diod. 15. 70. 1).

Though the second invasion of the Peloponnesus was far less impressive in scale and achievement than the first, there was little else required to complete the decimation of Spartan power. The Boeotian army captured or devastated the lands of almost all of Sparta’s remaining Peloponnesian allies and the Spartans had proven themselves militarily incapable of preventing them. The inevitable result of Sparta’s failure to support their allies was a decline of interest in the common goals of the Peloponnesian League, replaced by a zeal for self-preservation in which the allies were forced either to make peace with Thebes and the Arcadian League or at the very least be compliant and accept the changing balance of power. From this point only Corinth and Phlius would continue to support the Spartans with any enthusiasm and even this was beginning to dwindle. For all intents and purposes Epameinondas would have returned to Thebes reasonably certain of the success of the expedition. However, with a high degree of security from Sparta, the Arcadian League decided to assert their own policies independent of their Theban allies.650

A Year Out of Office – 368 B.C.

When Epameinondas returned to his home in Thebes he would have quickly learned of the exploits of Pelopidas in northern Greece.651 After the death of Jason and his now late

would conflate the ethnicities of Celts and Iberians into one (Strabo 1. 2. 27). Thus, one might conclude that both Xenophon and Diodorus knew nothing more of these mercenaries other than that they probably came from either, or both, eastern Spain and parts of France.


651 Stylianou (1998), 456, has argued that Pelopidas returned before Epameinondas even set out on the second Peloponnesian expedition because of the likelihood that Pelopidas had a significant force. Though the 7,000 that went into the Peloponnesus was the standard draft of a Boeotian force, they probably could
successors, Polydorus and Polyphron, Alexander of Pherae had been attempting to re-assert his authority over Thessaly as the tagus. In response to this, the Aleuadae of Larissa travelled to Macedonia and asked the king, Alexander II, to help them overthrow the tyrant. When Alexander of Pherae caught wind of the plot he intended on attacking Macedonia, but the king acted first and occupied the cities of Larissa and later Crammon. The tyrant could not (or would not) contend with the king and returned to Pherae. Unfortunately for Larissa and Crammon, Alexander II refused to relinquish control of the cities and occupied them with garrisons (Xen. Hell. 6. 4. 33-35; Diod. 15. 61. 2-5).

As a result of the defensive alliance with the Boeotian League, the latter had been requested to come to the Thessalians’ aid and, since Epameinondas was in the Peloponnesus at the time, Pelopidas was appointed general of an army, which would march into Thessaly. He then proceeded to Larissa and appears to have negotiated the Macedonian garrisons’ withdrawal without any bloodshed. Once the Macedonians had departed, Pelopidas appears to have spent some time campaigning against the Pheraeans (Front. Strat. 1. 5. 2; 3. 8. 2; 4. 7. 28; Polyaen. 2. 4. 1-2), which resulted in unsuccessful negotiations with Alexander of Pherae. Following this, Pelopidas then marched further north into Macedonia where there was much civil strife: Alexander II was at war with his brother-in-law, Ptolemy of Alorus, over some dispute. They both requested Pelopidas’ presence so he could function as an arbiter, hoping to settle the crisis peacefully. Somehow, he managed to bring them to a temporary accord and, after making an alliance with Alexander II, Pelopidas received 30 hostages of noble lineage, as well as the king’s adolescent younger brother, Philip, who would eventually become the king himself (Diod. 15. 67. 3-4; Plut. Pel. 26. 1-4).

There is also some indication that Pelopidas reformed the Thessalian constitution at this point (IG II 1. 116, 175), see Westlake (1935), 134-138.

652 Buckler (1980a), 246, has argued that Pelopidas in fact concluded an agreement in which the Thebans would continue the resistance against the Pheraeans, allowing the Macedonian garrisons to return home and assist in the civil war against Ptolemy. However, Stylianou (1998), 455-456, has rightly pointed out that an agreement need not have been made: it is perhaps more likely that the Macedonians relinquished the cities without a fuss in order to secure the good will of the Thebans.

653 For these events see Westlake (1935), 126-131; Sordi (1958), 191-193, 202-203; Buckler (1980a), 110-119; Hatzopoulos (1985), 247-257. A speech by Aeschines appears to imply that Philip was still in Macedonia until after the death of Alexander II (Aeschin. 2. 26-29), a point argued by Stern (1884), 190 n. 2; Geyer (1930), 129; Bengston (1969), 274 n. 4, though on the strength of Plutarch and Diodorus other scholars have discounted this evidence, see Aymard (1954), 15-36; Hammond and Griffith (1979), 181,
The significance of Philip’s three-year ‘sojourn’ in Thebes is far from certain, but it is certainly possible that the military and diplomatic prowess of Epameinondas had a profound effect on the young prince.\textsuperscript{655} However, a minor discrepancy in the sources, with regards to whose residence Philip resided, has been largely ignored by scholars and, because it directly involves Epameinondas himself, is worth a brief discussion. There are eight separate references to Philip’s stay in Thebes, three providing non-specific information,\textsuperscript{656} and each of the rest offering unique detail. Plutarch states that Philip lived with the Theban, Pammenes (Plut. Plut. 26. 4). The Suda also mentions Pammenes, but as Philip’s lover, which does not necessarily imply that Philip stayed at his house (Suda s. v. Κάρανος). In one reference Justin merely states that Epameinondas and Pelopidas had great influence on Philip (Just. 6. 9. 7); however, in another, he specifically states that he stayed at the house of Epameinondas (Just. 7. 5. 2). Finally, Diodorus also reports that Philip was entrusted to the father of Epameinondas (Diod. 16. 2. 2-3), which is surely the same house as the son. As one can see, the sources are far from uniform in their details of Philip’s stay at Thebes; but in spite of this, most scholars have simply accepted Plutarch’s testimony that Philip stayed at the house of Pammenes.\textsuperscript{657}

Plutarch is perhaps accepted over the other accounts because of his likely use of Callisthenes and reconcilability with Diodorus’ book 15 reference, which probably came from Ephorus, though not necessarily. Hammond has argued that Justin used Theopompus for his book six reference and Marsyas the Macedonian for the reference in book seven.\textsuperscript{658} Thus with at least four possible contemporary sources it is easy to see why the traditions vary so much. We may well assert that because Diodorus’ book 16 tells us that Philip was given to the Thebans by the Illyrians, that he used a similar source to Justin’s book seven, which states essentially the same thing. Though this is far from clear, the discrepancy between the two references in Diodorus may be explained because his source for the information in book 16 was quite possibly that of Ephorus’ son Demophilus. However, Diodorus then goes on to

\textsuperscript{184 n. 3; Buckler (1980a), 299 n. 15. While exactly when Philip arrived in Thebes is less important for my argument, I have found the latter more convincing. 655 Hammond (1997), 355-372. But see Roisman (2017), 340. 656 Ael. Var. Hist. 13. 7; Dem. 19. 135; Diod. 15. 67. 4. 657 E.g. Grote (1872), 252; Hammond and Griffith (1979), 181, 204-206; Buckler (1980a), 118. 658 Hammond (1997), 355-356.}
claim that Philip was raised as a fellow student of Pythagorean philosophy with Epameinondas. This information is entirely erroneous as Epameinondas was most assuredly too old to be a fellow student and his philosophy teacher, Lysis, was most probably dead by this time (Plut. *De Gen. Soc.* 13/583c). Elder has suggested that Justin, on the other hand, has attempted to combine conflicting stories, though does not clarify the exact manner in which this was achieved.\textsuperscript{659} The *Suda*’s inclusion of Pammenes as Philip’s lover may well bear some truth, but it seems to imply that Amyntas was the one who offered Philip up as a hostage to Thebes. If there is any truth to the notion of Philip’s stay in Illyria as a hostage, the *Suda* may also have conflated two different episodes into one. Unfortunately, the sources for Philip’s stay in Thebes are too confused for any acceptable reconcilement or consensus to be reached; indeed, it does not seem particularly justifiable to accept Diodorus and Justin’s assertions that Philip stayed with Epameinondas. Despite this, Philip did stay in Thebes for three years and according to Aelian, when Alexander the Great destroyed Thebes, he spared those (plural) who had entertained Philip as a guest. This may imply that Philip stayed at more than one house, which is certainly possible considering the length of time he spent there.

Either way, Epameinondas will not have had very much time to meet the Macedonian prince when he first arrived as his political enemies again plotted against him. The existence of a second trial brought against him after the second invasion of the Peloponnesus, as previously discussed,\textsuperscript{660} cannot be confirmed for its historicity; however, recent scholarship tends to accept some historical truth in the testimony of Diodorus, our only specific account of the alleged trial. He relates that, during the recent invasion, when Epameinondas attacked the Spartan force while crossing the Isthmus, he allowed the remaining soldiers to return home under truce. Because of his leniency, his political enemies accused him of sparing the enemy as a personal favour to them. Charges of treason were then brought against him in the assembly and, as a result, he was removed from office and made a private citizen (Diod. 15. 72. 1-2). The main contention scholars have with this evidence is that if he was charged with treason, a crime punishable by death, why then did he receive such miniscule chastisement as removal from office? The answer, as proposed by Buckler, is

\textsuperscript{659} Elder (1873), 273.
\textsuperscript{660} See above, 144-147.
that Epameinondas was in fact acquitted: his removal from office, rather than a punishment, was merely the standard (Athenian) protocol in preparation to a trial of an official magistrate, known as *apocheirotonia*.\textsuperscript{661} However, this does not explain why he was a private citizen in the following campaigning season, which is the whole purpose of Diodorus’ inclusion of the anecdote and seems to imply that Epameinondas was sent off as a regular hoplite almost directly subsequent to the trial. Buckler has further argued that Diodorus has compressed events in 369 with 368, assuming that his removal from office stretched into the following campaigning season.

It is, of course, not unusual for Diodorus to make such awkward chronological mistakes. But because of this confusion, the presence of the second trial has occasionally been used as evidence for the low chronology with the second Peloponnesian invasion occurring in 368.\textsuperscript{662} Thus, after returning, Epameinondas was charged, removed from office and sent into Thessaly as a regular hoplite on the campaign to rescue Pelopidas and Ismenias. However, if this were the case there would have to be three separate campaigns into Thessaly in a single year: one, Pelopidas’ first incursion; two, Pelopidas’ second incursion with Ismenias and subsequent capture; three, the rescue attempt with Epameinondas as an ordinary hoplite. The acceptance of the low chronology would require acceptance of this order of events, which I find very difficult. There was hardly enough time in the campaigning season for three separate incursions into Thessaly and it seems unlikely that the Boeotian assembly would consider there was ample justification to use considerable expenditure in funding four campaigns in a single year, dealing with no single political or military situation that directly affected Boeotia. Furthermore, as noted above, Plutarch implies that Pelopidas first left for Thessaly after Epameinondas had already left for the Peloponnesus: it is hard to believe Pelopidas had already been on two campaigns in the north before Epameinondas had even returned. Given consideration to this, it makes far more sense for the second and third incursion into Thessaly to have occurred in the year following the first incursion and second Peloponnesian invasion.

\textsuperscript{661} Buckler (1980a), 38, 144, 285 n. 38. See also Cary (1924), 183. For *apocheirotonia* in Athens, see Harrison (1971), 59; Hansen (1991), 220-221; Hamel (1998), 122-123.

\textsuperscript{662} Niese (1904), 86; Wiseman (1969), 190-192; Stylianou (1998), 454.
Stylianou has treated Buckler’s suggestion of a compression in Diodorus’ account with suspicion partly because of his preference to the low chronology, which would make a compression unnecessary and also because we cannot be certain if the Thebans really did use the Athenian practice of *apocheirotonia*. He has further argued that Diodorus’ testimony need not be taken as actual evidence for the trial having taken place, suggesting that the talk is of “slanderous accusations of treason” in the assembly (πλῆθος), as opposed to a law court. But if there was no trial, then there is no real reason to believe Diodorus’ further statement that he was removed from office. It is ironic that Stylianou is willing to accept Diodorus’, at best, murky sense of chronology but reject his very blatant assertion that the allegations went to trial. Whether or not a trial actually took place is difficult to ascertain; however, it is certainly clear Epameinondas did not receive the appropriate punishment for those who commit treason. Thus, we can conclude that he either was not charged at all or he was acquitted.

More important than the existence of the trial were the consequences of the allegations, which was the main purpose of Diodorus’ testimony. Both Plutarch and Nepos also offer evidence, which is often seen to confirm the second trial. Similar to Diodorus, they include clauses explaining why Epameinondas fought as a regular hoplite, briefly stating that he had incurred either the anger (ὀργήν) or envy (invidiam) of the Theban people (Plut. *Pel.* 28. 1; Nep. *Epam.* 7. 1). Of course, these statements do not confirm the occurrence of the trial, nor do they specifically state that he was stripped of his office; however, they do confirm that he was, at this point, a private citizen fighting as a hoplite. Ignoring Diodorus for the moment, off the strength of Plutarch and Nepos alone we can deduce that Epameinondas failed to be re-elected as boeotarch for this year. Then, bringing Diodorus back into the picture, his claim that allegations were brought against Epameinondas would explain why he failed the election, regardless of whether there was a trial or not. Undoubtedly, Meneceidas was at the forefront of the allegations and clearly succeeded in damaging Epameinondas’ reputation. During the elections early in 368, Epameinondas did not obtain enough votes to be re-elected as boeotarch and would therefore spend the year as a private citizen.

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663 Stylianou (1998), 469.
In order to establish Epameinondas’ role during the events of 368 it is necessary to briefly summarize the events in northern Greece from late in 369 to the first rescue attempt in Thessaly. Shortly after Pelopidas’ first intervention Alexander of Pherae had resumed his characteristic harassment of the Thessalian cities and the newly formed Thessalian League had proven ineffectual to stop him. Early in spring, as Buckler dates, another plea for assistance from Thebes was sent. Although the Boeotian assembly was unwilling to send a full-scale expedition into the north due to the lack of evidence that Alexander was violating the truce, they agreed to send two eminent Theban politicians: Pelopidas and Ismenias. Their apparent mission was to act as ambassadors with the intention of investigating the claims. Without bringing a military force their actions would accord with the terms of the truce, though they undoubtedly had an escort. But on their arrival in Thessaly, presumably in Pharsalus, Pelopidas seems to have sensed some impending danger from Alexander and thus began to recruit local Thessalian soldiers as a precaution (Diod. 15. 71. 2; Plut. Pel. 27. 1).

Meanwhile, dire news arrived from Macedonia where the level of political strife and variance had become severely troubling and complicated. Around this time, though perhaps earlier, Alexander II had been assassinated, allegedly by the arrangement of Ptolemy of Alorus. The usurper then made himself regent, ruling like a king, without actually claiming the kingship. Simultaneously, Pausanias, an exiled aristocrat of royal blood and pretender of the throne, laid his claim. These events divided the Macedonian people and triggered a civil war between the two factions. Then, Ptolemy requested help from the Athenian Iphicrates, who, with the intention of besieging Amphipolis, drove Pausanias out of Macedonia. In spite of the threat posed by Alexander of Pherae, Pelopidas would have been well aware of the significant loss should the Athenians gain influence in Macedonia; thus, it was necessary

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664 Buckler (1980a), 299 n. 7, rightly points out that Alexander was careful not to violate the truce with open aggression; rather, by “throwing the cities into confusion” (ὡς διαταράττοντα τὰς πόλεις: Plut. Pel. 27. 1). Cf. Westlake (1935), 139, who thinks there was hostility.

665 Ismenias was likely to be the son of the late homonymous statesman, see Swoboda (1916), 2139-2140; Buckler (1980a), 135; Georgiadou (1997), 187.

666 Buckler (1980a), 120.

667 Diod. 15. 71. 1; Aesch. 2. 26-29; Athen. 629d = Marsyas FGrH 135-136 F 11; Just. 7. 5. 4; Nep. Iphicr. 3. 2. For these events see Cloché (1960), 123-124; Wiseman (1969), 185-186; Cawkwell (1978), 26; Hammond and Griffith (1979), 182-184; Buckler (1980a), 121-123; Hatzopoulos (1983), 22-23; Hatzopoulos (1985), 247-257; Hammond (1989), 87; Roy (1994), 194-195; Georgiadou (1997), 197; Howe BNJ 135-136 F 11.
for him to take the initiative and march northwards in order to re-establish relations with the new ruler.668

Due to his lack of troops, Pelopidas managed to hire what must have been a reasonably sized, though crude, force of mercenaries, subsequently marching them into Macedonia. Unfortunately, Ptolemy cleverly took an opportunity to bribe the mercenaries with higher pay so that they would abandon Pelopidas and this they did. With little or no support, the Theban statesmen were potentially stranded in hostile territory; however, Ptolemy realized the temporary nature of his advantage: imprisoning the Thebans could bring their wrath upon them and an alliance with Athens would leave him open to Athenian territorial ambitions. It was therefore more prudent to strike a bargain with the Thebans. Ptolemy then welcomed Pelopidas and the two discussed the terms of an alliance: the Thebans would recognize his regency in return for 50 more hostages, including Ptolemy’s son, Philoxenus, as well as accepting Perdiccas and Philip’s respective claims to the throne (Plut. Pel. 27. 2-3). Regardless of the unjust nature of Ptolemy’s usurpation, the alliance settled matters satisfactorily in the interest of Boeotia, thus impinging upon Athenian designs in the north and preventing any chance of further Macedonian influence to the south, for the time being.669 In every way this accords well with the policies of Epameinondas, which were clearly to ensure the defence of Boeotia and did not include the imposition of hegemonic or imperialistic designs upon foreign states; instead, merely to establish politically and militarily advantageous alliances. It is clear from Pelopidas’ actions that he and Epameinondas held essentially the same ideals for the government of the Boeotian League.

However, having sent the Macedonian hostages to Thebes, Pelopidas would display a certain degree of rashness that his brother-in-arms did not. Having learned that the mercenaries who had betrayed him were staying in Pharsalus with their families and belongings, he conceived the idea to exact some form of punishment on them. He therefore proceeded to gather together as many Thessalian soldiers who would follow him and led them to Pharsalus. On arrival in the vicinity of the city, the forces of Alexander of Pherae

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668 Buckler (1980a), 121.
were also present. Pelopidas and Ismenias decided to approach them under the protection of their role as ambassadors. Unfortunately, they were now marching on a Thessalian city with an army and without any guise of legality in their actions. Alexander saw this and jumped on the opportunity to arrest them immediately before taking the city of Pharsalus himself.\(^670\) Alexander had now, by such an act, effectively declared open war with Thebes.\(^671\)

News of Pelopidas and Ismenias’ incarceration outraged the Theban populace who appear to have reacted almost immediately despite the lateness in the campaigning season. It was quickly voted to send a full-scale draft into Thessaly consisting of 8,000 hoplites and 600 cavalry. Two boeotarchs, Cleomenes and Hypatus, men who were comparatively inexperienced in military matters, were made the leaders of the expedition. Epameinondas, though without any distinguished position, joined the sortie as a regular hoplite, still willing to do what he could to serve his country. Alexander appears to have been surprised by the rapidity of the Theban reprisals and quickly fast-tracked his alliance with the Athenians by offering to sell them meat at half an obol per μνᾶ. They subsequently sent 1,000 hoplites with 30 triremes under the leadership of Autocles. On hearing of this alliance Epameinondas is said to have exclaimed “and we will supply the Athenians wood for this meat as a gift, for if they cause trouble, we will cut down their country” (Diod. 15. 71. 3; Plut. apo. reg. imp. 71. 17/193d-e).\(^672\)

Despite this, the Boeotian army arrived in Thessaly while the Athenians were still circuiting Euboea. With the enemy’s reinforcements not yet present, it was the boeotarchs’s intention to entice Alexander into a pitched battle as soon as possible. Alexander’s hoplites were inferior in number and experience to the Boeotian veterans and could not hope to defeat them head on; however, their cavalry force was far greater than the Boeotians and could thus prove advantageous.\(^673\) Being aware of this potential problem, the boeotarchs recruited some

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\(^670\) Diod. 15. 71. 2; Plut. Pel. 27. 4-6; Nep. Pel. 5. 1-2; Paus. 9. 15. 1; Polyb. 8. 35. 7.

\(^671\) Xen. Hell. 7. 1. 28; Diod. 15. 71. 3; Dem. 23. 120; IG II² 1. 116. 39-40. It is clear that Alexander was hoping to protect himself from further Theban intervention by an alliance with Athens and the negotiation of a settlement, which would legitimize his position as tagus, see Stern (1884), 194-195; Westlake (1935), 141-142; Buckler (1980a), 123-124.

\(^672\) ἡμεῖς δὲ... ἔλα τραίσα παρέξωμεν Ἀθηναίοις ἐπὶ τὸ κρέα ταύτα: τὴν γάρ χώραν αὐτῶν τεμοῦμεν, ἃν πολυπραγμονώσφι... Buckler (1980a), 125; Hornblower (2011), 258.

\(^673\) Xenophon’s report that a draft of 8,000 cavalry could be mustered under the rule of Jason is referring to a unified Thessaly; however, it may inform us, to an extent, on the size of the forces that Alexander
of the local Thessalians to swell their own cavalry force. However, Alexander had no intention of facing the Boeotian veterans in battle; instead, he would use his superior cavalry in the open plains. Thus, when Cleomenes and Hypatus had crossed the pass at Thermopylae, Alexander surprised them with the presence of his army (Paus. 9. 15. 2), causing the Thessalian allies to abandon them. Then, while avoiding battle with the Thebans, Alexander cut off their supplies by preventing them from foraging for more food. This gave enough time for Autocles and other allies to arrive. Now running low in supplies and facing an enlarged enemy army, the boeotarchs decided to retreat. Alexander immediately set his cavalry upon the withdrawing force, harassing them with missile weapons. In an attempt to shake off the attackers they led the army onto difficult terrain (τόπους χαλεπούς), which caused the phalanx to fall into disorder. According to Diodorus, they were in a position where they could neither halt nor advance and, due to lack of provisions, became utterly helpless. If the boeotarchs were forced to surrender at this point, the consequences would have been devastating for the Boeotian League: if the bulk of their army and their two best generals were captured it would likely have instantly nullified any influence and power that the Thebans had over the rest of mainland Greece.

Fortunately, the army, being faithful to the general that made them great, demanded that Epameinondas take the helm and lead them to safety. With no protestations from the, undoubtedly, panicking boeotarchs, Epameinondas reformed the phalanx with apparent ease and wheeled them toward the attackers, who quickly backed off from the reorganized hoplites. Then, placing his light-armed men and cavalry at the back of the phalanx in order to ward off the skirmishing attackers, he began to continue the retreat. This manoeuvre was a great success: the Thessalian force, being unable to inflict further damage on the Boeotians, withdrew. The story serves as a brilliant example of Epameinondas’ level headedness and skill as a general. Though Westlake describes the episode as picturesque, other scholars

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674 Diod. 15. 71. 4-5; Plut. An Seni 27/797a-b; Nep. Epam. 7. 1.
675 Diod. 15. 71. 6; Plut. An Seni 27/797b; Quaes. Conv. 5. 6/680b; Paus. 9. 15. 2; Nep. Epam. 7. 2-3. Though Pausanias provides the location of Alexander’s ambush, his account compresses this event with the campaign on the following year.
676 Westlake (1935), 143.
have less trouble believing it.\textsuperscript{677} Considering the fact that Epameinondas and Pelopidas had led every major campaign in recent years it is unsurprising that the Thebans could not provide an experienced general for the expedition and that they were unable to deal with the skirmishing tactics of Alexander. There is also no reason to doubt that Epameinondas was present, considering he had not been elected to the magistracy. Furthermore, this event was likely the predominant reason for his return to office the following year: he had rescued the league from despondency, which must have re-established his good reputation amongst his peers and the populace.

Although this was unquestionably Epameinondas’ finest achievement of the year, was it all he did? The fact that he was not elected to the head of government does not necessarily mean that he did not take part in any other civic duties for that year. There is, in fact, one piece of anecdotal evidence that may be reasonably associated with this year. Plutarch states that he was appointed the position of \textit{telmarchos} (τέλμαρχος),\textsuperscript{678} which he describes as the official in charge of keeping streets clean (Plut. \textit{Praec. Ger. Rep.} 15/811b). Though it may reasonably be argued that this was just as likely to have occurred before 371 when Epameinondas first became a boeotarch,\textsuperscript{679} however, Plutarch specifically claims that he was given the position as a result of ill-will through hubris (φθόνῳ καὶ πρός ὁβρίῳ). His popularity in the assembly was clearly very low at this point and would therefore be the most fitting year for him to have held such a position. If we can trust the anecdote, then it speaks volumes about his love of civic duty. Plutarch reports that he advanced, what was normally considered a lowly job, to an office of distinction. Epameinondas’ apparently selfless attitude to civic duty meant that he would try to excel in whatever task was set before him. Perhaps from the combined goodwill he received from his time as \textit{telmarchos} and his brilliant rescue of the Boeotian army, his chances of getting enough votes to be elected boeotarch for the following year were greatly increased.


\textsuperscript{678} τελέαρχος in the Teubner edition: Bernardakis (1893), 93.

\textsuperscript{679} See Meissner (1798), 378a; Pomtow (1870), 100; Swoboda (1900), 2698.
Chapter 7
Diplomatic Failure and Rising Tensions within the Alliance
367-366 B.C.

Ambitions of the Peloponnesian States 369-367 B.C.

Following Epameinondas’ second expedition to the south, the independent states in the Peloponnesus began to pursue their own policies of self-interest, as opposed to the larger objectives of the Boeotian-Peloponnesian League. After the Boeotian army left, late in 369, the mercenaries that had been sent by Dionysius of Syracuse invaded the territory of Sicyon, defeating and killing some 70 Sicyonians. They then proceeded to capture the stronghold of Deras.680 Once the mercenaries had departed, the Argives then attacked Epidaurus with apparent limited success. On their return journey they were blocked from returning home by Chabrias with his force of Athenians, Corinthians and mercenaries.681 Meanwhile, Lycomedes stirred up the Arcadians’ desire for hegemony, convincing them that they should not be so dependent upon the Boeotians. Ready for more fighting, he led them to the Argolid in order to secure the safe return of the Argive force: being threatened from both sides, Chabrias was thus forced to retire. Then, perhaps combining with the Argives, the Arcadians attacked the Messenian Asine,682 defeating the garrison and the polemarch, Geranor, before ravaging the outer city. Xenophon also seems to imply further campaigning but is not specific. Because of these events, the Eleans asked for the return of the cities,683 which Sparta

680 This site has not been identified, though it was likely to be near Sicyon, see Underhill (1900), 274; Talbert (2000), 894.
681 It is not stated who these mercenaries were, though they may have been the ones sent by Dionysius, despite the fact that Xenophon says they had already departed (Xen. Hell. 7. 1. 22).
682 It should be noted that Xenophon clearly states “Ἀσίνη τῆς Λάκανα”, but Grote (1872), 248; Underhill (1900), 275; Shipley (2004a), 559, are probably correct in thinking that the Messenian Asine is more likely. Indeed, it has before been suggested that the Laconian Asine (i.e. the Asine in Laconia proper) did not exist, see Smith (1873b), 240, though cf. Shipley (2004b), 574.
683 The Eleans had probably regained Margana and Scillus but most of the cities of Triphylia and Lasion appear to have joined the Arcadian League. The Eleans now had very little reason to remain in the alliance as Sparta no longer held their territory, whereas Arcadia, their ally, did, see Roy (1971a), 575. Though the situation may have been somewhat more complicated than this, see Bourke (2018), 187-191.
Then, probably in the winter or early spring of 368, a renewed attempt at a general peace had manifested itself. At the behest of Artaxerxes, the satrap of Phrygia, Ariobarzanes sent his trusted servant, Philiscus of Abydus, to mainland Greece in an attempt to bring the warring Greek states to some form of accord. The Persian king was once again motivated by the desire to utilize Greek mercenaries, hoping to reclaim Egypt, as well as the growing dangers of widespread rebellion, which would soon come forth as the so-called ‘Great Satrap’s Revolt’. Though Sparta or Athens may have, in fact, been the initiators of the congress, it was held in Delphi, which represented a position of neutrality, as it is perhaps unlikely that Thebans would have attended a meeting at the former two states, considering their ongoing hostilities. Though it is not explicitly stated, all city-states may have been represented and a general peace would have been mutually beneficial for all parties; however, the Spartans refused to recognize the autonomy of Messenia, which resulted in the breakdown and overall failure of the negotiations. It is also possible that the issues of Athenian claims to Amphipolis and Theban leadership of Boeotia were raised, though none of the leading powers had much reason to dispute the former, nor were they in any position to prevent the Arcadians on two separate campaigns before and after the Boeotians’ second invasion. It is certainly clear that the Spartans were not capable of preventing expeditions with military force and it is, then, unsurprising that the Arcadians would make the most of this apparent weakness.

The scale of the organization and potential threat that these revolts posed to the Persian monarchy has been disputed: the traditional view considers them as a combined effort against Artaxerxes by many of the western satraps, which constituted a high level of danger, see Judeich, (1892), 190-225. However, in his reassessment of the events, Weiskopf (1989) concluded that the revolts were nothing more than small-scale, independent satrapal rebellions that posed no real threat to the Persian crown. Weiskopf's thesis has since received a mixed reception from almost utter rejection, see Moysen (1991), 113-122, to some degree of acceptance, see Wiesehöfer (2001), 90; Briant (2003), 656-675, 993-998. The main problem, it has been argued, with Weiskopf's thesis is his minimal understanding of his sources, cf. Hornblower (1990b), 363-365. He is all too ready to dismiss the evidence of Diodorus without in-depth discussion of the historian’s intentions and use of his own sources. Because of Diodorus’ propensity to exaggerate the events he describes, a middle ground may be preferable, where there was some loose degree of organization between the satraps, adding up to a reasonably significant threat to Artaxerxes.

For Sparta see Stylianou (1998), 461-462; for Athens, see Laistner (1936), 209. It is also quite possible that the conference was propagated by Philiscus himself, see Rung (2013), 40.
dispute the latter. As a result, Philiscus remained on the mainland in order to hire a force of 2,000 mercenaries to support the Spartan war effort (Xen. Hell. 7. 1. 27; Diod. 15. 70. 2).

It is abundantly clear that, overall, the Persians were mostly interested in procuring the goodwill of the Spartans. Ariobarzanes had been on consistently friendly terms with Sparta and naturally he saw them as the ideal city-state to support (Xen. Hell. 5. 1. 28; Ages. 2. 26), given their traditional superiority. Persian support ought to guarantee the return of Messenia to Sparta: by treaty or through military force. Being aware of the alliance, Philiscus also travelled to Athens and appears to have garnered their support, possibly by recognizing their right to the Chersonesus. As a reward, Ariobarzanes and Philiscus were awarded Athenian citizenship (Dem. 23. 141). This Persian intervention, though perhaps instigated by Artaxerxes, appears to have been directly under Ariobarzanes’ control. His ostensible intention was to benefit his friends, the Spartans, but under the circumstances, providing them with support only served to guarantee a continuance of the war in Greece, contrary to the king’s avowed intentions. Indeed, in the following year at Susa, Artaxerxes was swayed rather easily in favour of the Thebans. All this seems to indicate that Ariobarzanes either failed to grasp contemporary mainland Greek politics or he wilfully acted to benefit those he favoured over those who were certainly the most powerful at this time.

Significantly, the proceedings of this failed peace treaty may illuminate some points of Theban policy. In spite of the possibility that Athens was involved at least one scholar is suspicious of this assumption. Though Diodorus refers to it as a Common Peace (εἰρήνην… κοινήν), which implies the inclusion of all city-states, Xenophon claims that only the Spartans and the Thebans, with their allies, were present. When considering that the main

687 It has been speculated that Diomedon of Cyzicus was also sent because of his alleged attempt to bribe Epameinonondas, see Weiskopf (1989), 35 n. 63; Ruzicka (2012), 125, 262 n. 12; cf. Rung (2013), 43-44; however, this is unlikely as Epameinondas did not hold office at this point, unless the congress was called in late 369. On another note, Dionysius of Syracuse has also been purported involvement, see Cartledge (1987), 200, 310; Stylianou (1998), 461-462. Against this view see Weiskopf (1989), 35 n. 62.

688 Whether or not, this was for the beneficence of Artaxerxes or Ariobarzanes’ own independent ambitions is not necessarily clear but has certainly been conjectured upon, see Buckler (1977), 141-142; Heskel (1997), 124. Similarly, Weiskopf (1982), 362-365; Weiskopf (1989), 35-36, interpret it as independent actions but without the pre-mediated notion of rebellion. See also Rung (2013), 35-50.

689 Buckler (1980a), 103, further suggests that Antalcidas was present as the Spartan ambassador due to his previous friendship with Ariobarzanes.

690 Heskel (1997), 124-125. There is no explicit evidence for this.

691 See below, 185-186.
issue at hand was Messenia, Weiskopf is right in asserting that Athens’ presence was unnecessary.\textsuperscript{692} If then, as Xenophon reports, the negotiations revolved around whether the Thebans would agree to allow Messenia to return to the ownership of Sparta, we can see a possible opportunity missed. If this was the only major issue at hand; then, if the Thebans agreed with the terms, this would, implicitly, compel the Spartans to recognize Theban leadership over the Boeotian League. Even though some politicians in Thebes were against Peloponnesian intervention, it is clear that the majority, at this point, still considered the reduction of Sparta a key policy. It is most likely that Epameinondas was not present at the proceedings, nor could we confirm the presence of the likes of Pelopidas, as the sources do not name any specific personnel with the exception of Philiscus. This may imply that, in spite of Epameinondas’ absence, his policies still bore the majority of support within the Theban assembly. Certainly, allowing Sparta to regain any of its former economic power was out of the question. On the other hand, Epameinondas’ exclusion from office during this year may have been the primary reason that Thebes did not send an expedition into the Peloponnesus in order to support their allies against an imminent Spartan counterattack.

Around this time, Dionysius of Syracuse formed a defensive alliance with Athens (\textit{IG II}\textsuperscript{2} 1. 105) and provided a force of mercenaries to the Spartan-Athenian alliance, which arrived in Athens, either during or sometime after the Peace of Philiscus. Although the Athenians argued they should fight in Thessaly against the Thebans, the Spartans preferred that they join them in the Peloponnesus. Perhaps because of their closer ties with Sparta, the latter option was chosen and certainly the wiser, as the Spartan army desperately needed to reinforce their diminished numbers, particularly as the Arcadians and Argives seemed dead set on continuous campaigning against them (Xen. \textit{Hell.} 7. 1. 28). With, perhaps, 4,000 reinforcements in total,\textsuperscript{693} Agesilaus’ son Archidamus then led the Spartan counterattack against Arcadia. The campaign was a relative success for the Spartans, who re-conquered Caryae after despatching every man in the garrison. Then, after a series of manoeuvres in or

\textsuperscript{692} Weiskopf (1982), 362; Weiskopf (1989), 35 n. 63, 64. Though Messenia may have been the major issue, see also Ryder (1965), 134-135, Weiskopf’s arguments against a Common Peace fail to convince. It may be noted that the previous peace treaties, which involved the intervention of Persia were always Common Peaces; therefore, we may expect that this was no exception. Further, Xenophon’s silence on the matter is not an argument against Diodorus: Xenophon does not once, in his \textit{Hellenica}, use the term \koin{"e}ieron, cf. Jehne (1994), 79-82.

\textsuperscript{693} The number of mercenaries from Dionysius may well have been the same as the previous year, see Stylianou (1998), 462.
near the plain of Megalopolis, the Arcadian-Argive force was devastated in the Tearless Battle, during which, not a single soldier under Archidamus was killed. News of this victory was greeted by uncharacteristic elation in Sparta, with Agesilaus himself apparently bursting into tears.  

Also during this year, Euphron, the most influential man in Sicyon, convinced the Arcadians and Argives that the reigning oligarchic government in his city would inevitably return to its alliance with Sparta. They subsequently helped him to establish a democracy in Sicyon, making Euphron one of the leading generals of the city. In his ambitions Euphron then began removing many of his rivals, which allowed him to rule the city as a democratic tyrant (Xen. *Hell.* 7. 1. 44-46; Diod. 15. 70. 3). It seems that, although the coup was enacted with the support of the Peloponnesian allies, Thebes was not consulted before hand and the event serves to demonstrate the rapid undermining of their leadership. Though, despite any misgivings they may have had on the reversals of Epameinondas’ policies, it appears they agreed to allow Euphron to retain his ‘democracy’ on the condition that a Theban harmost and garrison be allowed to occupy the city for defence against Phlius and Corinth (Xen. *Hell.* 7. 2. 11).  

Though the results of the Peace of Philiscus seemed to indicate that the Thebans would continue to support the Peloponnesian states against Sparta, their lack of activity in the south during 368 is certainly one of the primary reasons for the defeat at the Tearless Battle. It may be that the Thebans were disinclined to support the Arcadian and Argive endeavours,

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694 Xen. *Hell.* 7. 1. 28-32; Diod. 15. 72. 3; Plut. *Ages.* 33. 3-5; *Apo. Lac.* 20. 5/218f. For this campaign see Buckler (1980a), 105-107; Cartledge (1987), 387; Hamilton (1991), 235-236; Shipley (1997), 355-359; Ray (2012), 72-73. There has been some suggestion that the campaign was an attempt to hinder or prevent the construction of Megalopolis, which lay on a strategically significant crossroads.

695 Earlier scholarship on Euphron placed this event in 367 due to Xenophon’s implication that it occurred after the Achaean resumption of their oligarchic government, see Grote (1872), 256-258; Meyer (1913), 446-447; Skalet (1928), 73. See below, 200-207, for the Achaean oligarchies. However, considering Euphron’s role in the attack on Phlius in 366, later scholars have preferred Diodorus’ order of events, placing it in 368, see Beloch (1922), 187-188; Meloni (1951), 18; Roy (1971a), 591; Griffin (1982), 71; Lewis (2004), 65; Loios et al. (2011), 69.

696 Buckler (1980a), 100-101, suggests that the Thebans were content with the internal changes at Sicyon provided they steered clear of Spartan influence.

697 Many scholars assert that the Theban garrison and harmost occupied the city when it was taken during the second Peloponnesian campaign in 369, e.g. Grote (1872), 244-245; Beloch (1922), 180 n. 1; Skalet (1928), 72-73; Buckler (1980a), 98. However, if the dating of Euphron’s coup may be placed in 368, see n. 695, then it is unlikely that Arcadians and Argives would support an attack against a Theban held city and more likely that the garrison arrived as a result of the coup, see Griffin (1982), 71-73.
which appeared more self-serving than for the greater good of the alliance, particularly in the case of Elis’ disillusionment with Arcadia. But it is no coincidence that the lack of Theban intervention occurred during the very year that Epameinondas failed to retain his office, perhaps allowing his political opponents, who had anti-Peloponnesian policies, to hold sway in the assembly during his absence. Pelopidas’ concern with Thessalian affairs may also have been a factor, particularly as he was in a Pheraean jail cell at this stage. The independent ambitions of the Peloponnesian states, especially those of the Arcadians, under Lycomedes, had begun to sever the unifying factor in the Theban-Peloponnesian alliance: anti-Spartan policy. Elis no longer had much reason to oppose Sparta and the Arcadians were openly resentful of Theban leadership, attempting to fight without the latter’s support. Because of the lack of a unanimous policy within the Theban assembly and their failure to arbitrate between their allies or send support to oppose the Spartan counterattack, the seeds of the fall of the Theban Hegemony had been sown. It is certainly possible that, had Epameinondas been present, he would have attempted to prevent these outcomes; however, it is difficult to speculate, as the following year would see a continued inability of Thebes to function as an effective hegemon.

**Pelopidas’ Rescue**

Early in 367 Epameinondas was successfully re-elected as boeotarch. Without any further hesitation, the assembly again agreed to send a second expedition in an attempt to rescue Pelopidas and Ismenias from the clutches of Alexander of Pherae. Pelopidas, by this stage, had been imprisoned for several months and, if we can believe the testimony of Plutarch, he had courageously undergone much torture and humiliation, but not without encouraging the hate of Thebe (the wife of Alexander and daughter of the late Jason) against her husband (Plut. *Pel*. 28. 1-5; *Reg. Imp. Apo.* 72. 3-4/194d).\(^{698}\) Although Pelopidas was

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\(^{698}\) As the story of Pelopidas’ incarceration and secret meetings with Thebe are preserved only by Plutarch, Georgiadou (1997), 199-200, has suggested that it may have been invented by him. Although, Plutarch also notes that Jason had been friendly towards Pelopidas, which, if true, may lend some plausibility to the story; indeed, Jason's wife may well have been a Theban (Xen. *Hell.* 6. 4. 37), which could explain why their daughter was named Thebe, see Westlake (1935), 89.
Epameinondas’ friend and is said to have saved his life,⁶⁹⁹ there was likely to have been more practical motivations for this campaign than simply, once again, risking the Boeotian army for the sake of two men. The previous year’s campaign had resulted in Thebes’ first significant military defeat since the Corinthian War and certainly must have served to weaken their reputation: it was important for this reason to return to Thessaly and prove to Alexander that he could not toy with the wrath of the Boeotian League without consequences. Having forced the Boeotian army from Thessaly with such ease Alexander would have been encouraged by his success and would therefore see no reason why he should further succumb to the whims of any foreign power. But now with an experienced general at the helm the campaign would be executed with far more efficiency.

It is likely that the Boeotian army would have consisted of a regular draft similar to that of the previous year. Once gathered, they marched north, probably sometime early in spring. We have very little information about this campaign; however, one anecdote from Polyaeus preserves a small portion, which is often cited but rarely discussed (Polyaeus 2. 3. 13).⁷⁰⁰ If the evidence could be considered genuine it may help to reconstruct the general course of events. There are, in fact, a number of reasons to trust Polyaeus’ testimony. As he says, in an attempt to prevent the Boeotian army’s entrance into Thessaly, the tyrant’s force guarded the bridge over the Spercheus River. Unwilling to risk his soldiers crossing in the face of the enemy, Epameinondas instead encamped somewhere near the southern bank of the river. At dawn he noticed that heavy fog would envelop the river: from this a plan was devised. Either the following night, or another, the Boeotian soldiers were each instructed to carry two logs of wood: one green and one dry. The dry wood was then ignited below the green wood, which created a dense smoke. By morning the smoke served to heavily augment the fog, thus obscuring the vision of the enemy. He subsequently gathered his force and crossed the river unobserved. By the time the fog had cleared the Boeotians had enough time to be drawn into ranks before Alexander’s men could respond.

⁶⁹⁹ See above, 63.
⁷⁰⁰ Roisman (2017), 311, places the anecdote during the previous expedition to Thessaly. Certainly, both expeditions are possible contexts, cf. Buckler (1980a), 127.
Firstly, it is probable that Epameinondas entered Thessaly via the pass at Thermopylae, just as had been the route on the previous campaign. Alexander\textsuperscript{701} may have, once again, been attempting to ambush the Boeotian army after they had crossed the pass. But perhaps, on this occasion, they failed to reach their chosen position before the Boeotians had reached the western coast of the Malian Gulf; therefore, they decided to guard the bridge at the river Spercheus,\textsuperscript{702} hoping to ward Epameinondas from crossing. If Alexander had become aware of the oncoming invasion, sending troops to guard these passages was militarily prudent: he had succeeded in this action during the previous year and would therefore be relatively confident in the success of a similar stratagem. The fact that it failed is owed more to the creative thinking of Epameinondas than to the incompetence of Alexander.

What happened next, before Pelopidas’ release, is not recorded, but one clue may be found in the words of Plutarch. He states that Epameinondas was concerned that Alexander might execute his prisoners if bloodshed occurred; as a result, he says, “Epameinondas… kept the battle in suspense, and going in a roundabout motion, his preparations and threatening movements restricted the tyrant, thus did not stir up his arrogance and neither encourage his cruelty and arouse his hot-headedness” (Plut. Pel. 29. 3).\textsuperscript{703} For one, Plutarch is perfectly consistent with Polyaeus: Epameinondas used a stratagem to subvert the enemy without engaging them directly. It is also clear that, like the previous campaign, Alexander was unwilling to risk a pitched battle against the Boeotian veterans; hence, the threatening movements (τῇ μελλήσει) indicate that Epameinondas attempted to bring Alexander into a position where he had to either fight or retire to a more advantageous position. Polyaeus describes exactly this: once the Boeotian force had crossed the river, they drew up into ranks, ready for battle. It is apparent that neither army properly engaged one another during the campaign; therefore, in this case it appears that Alexander would have withdrawn his men from the danger of an attack from the Boeotians.

\textsuperscript{701} It is entirely uncertain whether Alexander was present as the general in command of his defence force on this occasion; but, judging from his previous tendency to be amongst his soldiers, we may well conclude that he was, e.g. see above, 172-173.

\textsuperscript{702} For the river Spercheus see Béquignon (1937), 49-58.

\textsuperscript{703} Ἐπαμεινώνδας… ἐπηρεάτο τῷ πολέμῳ, καὶ κύκλῳ περιών, τῇ παρασκευῇ καὶ τῇ μελλήσει κατεσκεύασε καὶ συνέστησε τὸν τύραννον, ὡς μήτε ἀντεῖναι τὸ ἀδιάδες αὐτοῦ καὶ θρασυνόμενον μήτε τὸ πικρόν καὶ θυμοειδῆς ἐξερεθίσαι.
Plutarch has only provided a general outline of the manner in which the campaign was directed, which seems to imply that there were multiple scenarios similar to the anecdote. If Polyaeinus’ story was the only episode of the campaign recorded we would expect Plutarch to have made a more specific reference, such as the name of the river. The fact that he does not may indicate the existence of a fuller account of the campaign, from which Polyaeinus chose the most impressive part. Of course, Plutarch had no real reason to discuss the campaign in depth considering his narrative is about Pelopidas and not Epameinondas, but the general nature of his statement appears to be more of a summary of the events. In light of this we may then speculate that the campaign went on for several days in this way, consisting of a series of manoeuvres with each side attempting to gain the advantage. Unfortunately for Alexander, Epameinondas was clearly the superior and eventually must have outmanoeuvred him into a position where he was forced either to fight or come to terms.

Epameinondas’ cautious approach was fully justified as Alexander had a reputation for brutality;\(^{704}\) indeed, the people of nearby Meliboea and Scotussa had recently\(^{705}\) been massacred by him.\(^{706}\) Thus, instead of inducing Alexander to fight, he forced him to accept negotiations. With a certain degree of leverage, Alexander sent envoys that offered to exchange the prisoners for the conclusion of a peace treaty and friendship with one another. Buckler suggests that he may also have demanded recognition of his position as tagus and the allowance to conduct his affairs in Thessaly unhindered by Theban intervention. However, Epameinondas was unwilling to agree to such terms and offered nothing more than a 30 day truce, which would allow him to achieve his task without bloodshed and without committing

\(^{704}\) Alexander of Pherae has generally been viewed as no more than a bloodthirsty volatile tyrant (Xen. Hell. 6. 5. 34-35; Plut. Pel. 26. 2, 28. 3; 29. 3-5; Ael. Var. Hist. 14. 40). This image has been accepted by some modern scholars, esp. see Cary (1933), 85, cf. Westlake (1935), 156-158. For a sober treatment of Alexander, see Sprawski (2006), 135-147, who, in spite of his brutality, concluded that, though he may not have been as shrewd as Jason, he did in fact demonstrate some prudence of policy, as well as excellence as a general; but his attempts to maintain and progress what Jason had started were hindered by changing internal and external political situations.

\(^{705}\) Beloch (1922), 183 n. 1; Westlake (1935), 144-145, both think that the massacres occurred after Epameinondas’ third invasion into the Peloponnesus, but Sordi (1958), 215 n. 1, has noted that Diodorus places the event before Pelopidas’ rescue, which is consistent with Plutarch’s account and also offers a plausible context for Epameinondas’ cautiousness during this campaign. See also Stylianou (1998), 480.

\(^{706}\) Plut. Pel. 29. 4; Diod. 15. 75. 1; Paus. 6. 5. 2-3. Pausanias incorrectly dates the event to 371/0, but Diodorus’ date of 367/6 is preferable as Alexander had not yet come to power by the former date. See Beloch (1922), 183 n. 1, who suggests Pausanias mistook which Olympiad year it was.
Thebes to a permanent treaty, which he did not want, or because it had not been officially sanctioned by the assembly.\textsuperscript{707} Although Alexander could threaten to execute the prisoners, this would achieve nothing except incurring the wrath of the Boeotian army, which was likely to be in an advantageous position by this stage. As a result, he accepted the terms and released both Pelopidas and Ismenias.\textsuperscript{708}

Regardless of the success of the campaign, the overall dealing of the situation in Thessaly had been a failure on Pelopidas’ part. Following this campaign, the Thebans would not again intervene in the north until 364. Because of this, though he may not have realized it initially, Alexander had been awarded a respite from foreign influence on his internal Thessalian policies and, in spite of Plutarch’s statement that the people of Thessaly held high hopes at the presence of Epameinondas and his army (Plut. Pel. 29. 2), nothing had been achieved for these people.\textsuperscript{709} It may be argued that if Epameinondas had been the one in charge of Thessalian intervention he would have dealt with the situation more tactfully than Pelopidas, but he now seemed less than interested in affairs to the north; indeed, he only went to Thessaly out of necessity: first as a regular hoplite and second to rescue his friend and intimidate Alexander. If at first, he was in support of Thessalian intervention, the recent events in the Peloponnesus drew his attention to the south. For now, Epameinondas and the Theban assembly were satisfied with the fact that Alexander of Pherae would, at the very least, no longer present any kind of threat to Boeotia.

\textit{The Peace Treaty in Susa}

Perhaps in the autumn of 367,\textsuperscript{710} in light of their victory at the Tearless Battle and good relations with Ariobarzanes, the Spartans sent ambassadors to Susa, hoping to secure further support from the king. These certainly included Euthycles, who may have also been

\textsuperscript{707} Buckler (1980a), 126-128.
\textsuperscript{708} Plut. Pel. 29. 6; Reg. Imp. Apo. 72. 6/194e; Diod. 15. 75. 2; Paus. 9. 15. 2. Grote (1870), 272 n. 1, is suspicious that Alexander would accept so meagre terms in exchange for the prisoners; however, as I have argued, Alexander was in no real position to demand for more. Beloch (1922), 183 n. 1, also thinks that Alexander gave up Pharsalus because it was independent in 364, but it need not have been achieved on this occasion. Cf. Westlake (1935), 144 n. 2.
\textsuperscript{709} Buckler (1980a), 127-129.
\textsuperscript{710} For the chronology of the treaty and its subsequent events, see Heskel (1997), 101-107.
the same Euthycles representing Sparta in 333, before the Battle of Issus (Arr. Anab. 2. 15), and also may have involved Antalcidas (Plut. Artax. 22. 4). On hearing of this, other Greek states wasted no time in sending their own emissaries; thus, the Thebans sent Pelopidas and Ismenias. The Arcadians sent a pancratiast named Antiochus, the Eleans were represented by one Archidamus and the Argives sent an unnamed ambassador. Athens, independent of their allies, sent their own ambassadors, Timagoras and Leon. Preventing the Spartans from obtaining further Persian support was vital for the Boeotian-Peloponnesian alliance, especially as the Spartans had now proved their effective use of mercenaries, which demonstrated that monetary provisions would be all that they required in order to revitalize themselves as a threatening power in the Peloponnesus. Buckler also suggests that, by this year, the Thebans had essentially achieved their primary goals, particularly where the Peloponnesians were concerned. As a result, this was the perfect opportunity to receive universal recognition for their accomplishments.

Arriving in Susa around late September or October, the ambassadors proceeded to negotiate a settlement that would be endorsed by Artaxerxes. Though it is not specifically expressed, it is clear that the Spartans asked for recognition of their right to Messenia and the Athenians wanted recognition of their territorial expansion into the Aegean, perhaps specifically mentioning Amphipolis. During the course of these negotiations the words of Pelopidas won the favour of the king. He first highlighted the fact that the Thebans had supported the Persians at the Battle of Plataea in 479 and had since never directly opposed them, while the Athenians and Spartans had both made war upon them at one stage or another. He then described recent Theban victories against the Spartans and also noted the Arcadian-Argive loss at the Tearless Battle, thus illustrating the military superiority of the

711 Mosley (1972), 167-169.
712 Opinion on the presence of Antalcidas, as reported by Plutarch, is varied: Mosley (1963), 249; Mosley (1972), 168, prefers 370. Cawkwell (1976), 69 n. 32, interprets the evidence to refer to around 361, when Agesilaus was in Sparta. Similarly, Buckler (1977), 139-145, has concluded that Antalcidas was active on a similar date; however, Hamilton (1991), 254, has noted an inherent flaw in Buckler’s arguments. It is therefore, perhaps, prudent to follow the communis opinio that Antalcidas was present at Susa in 367, see Judeich (1894), 2345; Hammond (1957), 502; Ryder (1965), 81. Indeed, the Peace of 367 would be the most obvious context for Plutarch’s statement.
713 Xen. Hell. 7. 1. 33; Plut. Pel. 30. 1; Artax. 22. 4; Diod. 15. 81. 3; Ael. Var. Hist. 1. 21.
714 Buckler (1980a), 151-152; Buckler (2003), 327.
715 Because of the later rescript, see below, 219-220, it is often assumed that the Athenians specifically asked for recognition of Amphipolis, see Laistner (1936), 209; Hammond (1959), 502; Ryder (1965), 136; Buckler (1980a), 153, though this was not necessarily the case.
Boeotians. Artaxerxes was satisfied with these sentiments and allowed Pelopidas to dictate the major clauses of a new King’s Peace, which included autonomy for all poleis with particular recognition of Messenian independence, the disbanding of the Athenian fleet and it also appears that Elean claims to Triphylia were favoured over Arcadia. It has also been asserted that Artaxerxes offered to sponsor a Theban navy in order to contend with the threat of the Athenian naval superiority.

The reactions of each ambassador to the terms of the peace varied greatly. Archidamus, the Elean, was naturally pleased and praised the work of the king, whereas Antiochus, representing Arcadia, was so incensed that he refused the customary gifts. The situation was no more acceptable for the Athenian, Leon, who exclaimed that perhaps it was time for the Athenians to find another φίλος. In response to this Artaxerxes added a further clause, which stated that if the Athenians could formulate fairer (δικαιότερον) provisions, he would be open to further negotiations. Interestingly, the reaction of the Spartan ambassador is not recorded though it would be more than safe to presume it was negative, perhaps similar to that of Leon, though with more brevity. On the other hand, the second Athenian ambassador, Timagoras, seems to have been receptive to Pelopidas’ terms and may have even secretly colluded with him; indeed, on their return to Athens Leon, despite allegedly being colleagues for four years, made such accusations against him, as well as accusing him of receiving bribes from the king.

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716 Ryder (1965), 136, thinks that this was meant to be another Common Peace, which appears to be confirmed by Diodorus’ statement, “τας κοινας ὁμολογίας” (Diod. 15. 81. 3), though he only refers to it retrospectively.


719 This sentiment has, by some, been interpreted as a threat in which the Athenians would look for support from elsewhere, i.e. Ariobarzanes, see Hatzfeld (1946), 240; Buckler (1980a), 157; Tuplin (1993), 153; Buckler (2003), 330. However, it has been argued that the condemnation of Ariobarzanes may not have occurred until after the negotiations at Susa. Cf. Weiskopf (1989), 36-44.

720 Whether or not Leon’s words were a threat to Artaxerxes, this additional clause allowed a safeguard for the king, if the Thebans failed to enforce the peace, see Buckler (1980a), 157.

721 See Grote (1870), 267 n. 2. However, cf. Mosley (1968), 157-160.

722 Xen. Hell. 7. 1. 35-38; Plut. Pel. 30. 3-5; Artax. 22. 5-6; Dem. 19. 31, 137, 191; [Dem.] 7. 29; Suda s. v. Τιμαγόρας. The charges of bribery (as opposed to collusion) have been widely accepted by almost all scholars, though Tuplin (1993), 153, expressed some doubts due to Xenophon’s silence. In a recent article, Bearzot (2011), 21-37, after examining the differences between Plutarch and Xenophon’s
After a few weeks of negotiations, the ambassadors journeyed back to their respective homes to report the results of the proceedings. When Pelopidas returned, perhaps around February of 366, an embassy was held in Thebes inviting all of their allies to be present and swear an oath to the King’s Peace. Lycomedes, who represented Arcadia, among others, after hearing the provisions of the treaty, reacted with hostility. He claimed he had not come to swear any oath, merely to listen to the terms. Having been denied recognition of Triphylia as an Arcadian state, they were not likely to accept the treaty any time soon. He then defiantly stated that the embassy should be held at the seat of war (i.e. Arcadia), which was surely a comment designed to undermine Thebes’ right to hegemony. The Theban representatives responded angrily, claiming that he was deliberately destroying the alliance. As a result, Lycomedes and the other Arcadians refused to sit in the congress any longer and abruptly left. Because the Thebans’ most powerful allies refused to swear to the peace, the embassy ended in utter failure. Following this, in a desperate attempt to salvage the treaty, Thebes attempted to convince each individual city-state separately by sending ambassadors to them. Their first attempt, at Corinth, was again met with failure and apparently any other city they tried resulted in the same (Xen. Hell. 7. 1. 39-40). Thus, Theban attempts to re-enact the Peace of Antalcidas, which had officially made Sparta hegemon of Greece, ended ignominiously. Their efforts had proved that they could not gain universal acceptance of their leadership and their inability to properly arbitrate the dispute of Triphylia had caused a major fracture in the Boeotian-Peloponnesian alliance. As well as this, they were apparently unwilling to use military force to compel their allies, as the Spartans had done. The result was an embarrassing failure and major tarnishing of Thebes’ reputation as the hegemon of Greece.\footnote{Buckler (1980a), 157-160; Buckler (2003), 331-333, note that the failure of the Common Peace on this occasion demonstrated that the Greek states no longer feared the wrath of the Persian king in the same way that they did at the Peace of Antalcidas in 387/6. See also Tuplin (1993), 153.}

Out of this debacle, the question arises as to what role, if any, did Epameinondas play during this series of events. Firstly, it may be considered surprising that he was not the ambassador chosen to represent Thebes at Susa. On the surface he was far more qualified for accounts, as well as discussing the widely ignored Suda passage, concluded that the accusations of bribery were tacked on to his original charge in order to make his condemnation not just political but moral.
the job than Pelopidas: he had represented Thebes at as many as two peace treaties and was well known for his oratorical abilities, whereas Pelopidas was not. Furthermore, Epameinondas was most assuredly a boeotarch during this year, so there was no legal reason why he would not be chosen. Buckler dismissively asserts that he was probably held behind on the off chance that the state needed defending from invaders. There are at least two reasons why this is not a satisfactory explanation for his absence. First, Pelopidas was also an excellent general, perfectly capable of defending their state; thus, in light of Epameinodas’ oratorical prowess, the latter was surely the wisest choice. Second, it is unlikely that any major operations would take place while negotiations for a Common Peace were commencing: any particular party’s success in Susa would have been entirely counteracted if they had been undergoing simultaneous campaigning against the belligerents whom they were negotiating with.

It is, then, unlikely that Epameinondas’ absence from Susa can be simply explained away. In order to make some kind of attempt, it is important to recognize the sort of policy that Epameinondas pursued. Hammond has noted one important result of the failed treaty that may help to illuminate this context, which is worth quoting verbatim: “when the Greek states refused to accept the terms of the peace sponsored by Boeotia and Persia, the Boeotian Assembly accepted the policy advocated by Epaminondas, namely to enforce the terms by war on land and sea”. This is an echo of an anecdote Plutarch attributes to Epameinondas in which he states that if the assembly votes for him, it is a vote for war. Despite the fact that Epameinondas had represented Thebes at the treaty in 371, his famous altercation with Agesilaus had brought further war upon them. Two possibilities may be surmised from this: either the assembly did not want Epameinondas to represent them; or, he himself did not wish to represent them. For the former, he was known to go against the whims of the assembly, i.e. at the treaty in 371 or the invasion of Laconia in 370/69. It is possible that they could not trust him to stick true to their desired policies, which would ideally result in a general peace. On the other hand, he may well have been against the treaty and therefore refused to be a part of it. He had more first-hand experience dealing with the Arcadians and the Spartans and as a

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725 Hammond (1959), 503.
726 Plut. Reg. Imp. Apo. 71. 18/193e. See above, 89-90, for the possible context in which it was used.
result may well have been aware that the negotiations would fail. From the type of policy he pursued, and would continue to pursue, he appeared to understand that Greek city-states could only be compelled through careful compromise or military force. It seems, to me, perfectly likely that, when deciding who should represent Boeotia at Susa, the assembly either did not wish to choose Epameinondas, or if they did, he would have refused. Regardless of which is the most likely scenario, this is further evidence of the disunity of the Boeotian assembly.

The Third Peloponnesian Expedition 366 B.C.

After the failure of the Thebans to reach a settlement either with their enemies, or their allies, Epameinondas was now awarded free rein to pursue his aggressive policies. In 366, it was therefore agreed upon by the assembly that he should lead a third campaign into the Peloponnesus. The primary targets of this operation were the cities of Achaea. Ostensibly, according to Xenophon, this was an attempt to compel the Arcadians into recognizing Theban hegemony, essentially to achieve what they had just failed to obtain through negotiations (Xen. Hell. 7. 1. 41). Lycomedes’ challenge to the leadership had threatened the existence of the Boeotian-Peloponnesian alliance and it was therefore necessary for the Thebans to take more drastic measures to reaffirm their dominance. An invasion of Arcadia itself would not have been strictly justified, also undoubtedly detrimental to the alliance. Achaea, on the other hand, was technically allied with Sparta, making it a perfectly reasonable target for the invasion.  

Both the Eleans and Argives would be called to contribute troops and the natural rendezvous was clearly in Arcadia. If the Arcadians refused to be part of the campaign or allow allied access to their territory, the blame for the disruption of the alliance would land squarely on them.

There are of course other considerations that gave merit to the campaign, which could plausibly have been used by Epameinondas to justify the endeavour in the eyes of the

727 Meyer (1913), 445-446; Beloch (1922), 187-188; Roy (1971a), 579, all think that Achaea was of a neutral stance at this stage but cf. Buckler (1978), 91.
728 Meyer (1913), 445-446; Roy (1971a), 579; Buckler (1980a), 185-186.
Theban assembly. As Achaea was technically allied to Sparta their removal from the latter’s influence would further serve to weaken the enemy alliance, though perhaps more symbolically than militarily. They could also provide a levy to support allied endeavours, though the exact potential for this is uncertain. More significantly, however, the rift in the alliance with Arcadia was becoming a serious threat, particularly because of their dispute with Elis over Triphylia. If it came to open hostilities it was crucial for the Thebans to be able to maintain communication with Elis. Thus, attaching Achaea to the alliance would solve this impending problem because it could serve as a thoroughfare to the borders of Elis without having to pass through Arcadian territory. On the other hand, Achaea in itself was of little value strategically: the northern mountains of Arcadia acted as a natural barrier against attacks from the north, making it unlikely that Achaean cities would be used as military bases. Furthermore, the country of Achaea had always been of relatively meagre wealth, which would make the spoils of any campaign inevitably negligible.

There has been some suggestion that one of the primary reasons for the campaign was in order to control the Achaean coast and thus secure the Corinthian Gulf, which would allow the Thebans to disrupt Corinthian shipping. This argument appears to be tied in with the onset of the Theban naval program, which would commence later in the year. Epameinondas would also secure influence in Naupactus, a town on the northern coast of the gulf (discussed below), which could have been useful for blocking the straits. However, Buckler has argued that these factors are merely fortuitous coincidences: when the naval program commenced, its focus was on the Aegean and the Athenian navy, therefore such a scheme would have been overstepping the practicalities of their current situation. For certain, the most pressing matter was to reassert control over the precarious alliance with Arcadia. It is of course possible that Epameinondas did hope to use his gains in the Corinthian Gulf for later advantage, but at this stage it could not have been much more than a distant hope for

729 I would warn against the assumption that the Achaeans were militarily insignificant. Throughout this period, they consistently provided troops to the Spartans, who were in desperate need of as many as they could possibly muster. See above and below, 111, 151, 286, 310.
730 Anderson (1954), 82; Westlake (1975), 26-27; Buckler (1980a), 186. Though it should be noted that it does not appear that there was ever any intention of sacking these cities.
731 Willamowitz-Moellendorff (1921), 730; Carrata-Thomes (1952), 22.
732 See Chapter 9.
future plans. Though the naval program was not likely to be at the forefront of Theban considerations, this does not necessarily exclude the possibility that securing the gulf was part of their overall plan for the campaign. Other scholars, without even the suggestion of the Theban navy, have asserted that Epameinondas was attempting to turn the Corinthian Gulf into a “Boeotian lake”. While this is a very loose term, there is actually some merit to its use. By securing alliances with and access to all of the ports in the Corinthian Gulf, the Thebans could gain at least two important advantages: one, with or without a naval program, control of the coast would serve to hinder Corinthian shipping, at the very least preventing trade and access to said ports. The other point, which has been noted by some scholars, is that the Boeotian army now had another safe point of access to the Peloponnesus: by sea. It may be noted that the Spartan army had previously made their entry into Boeotia via the Corinthian Gulf in 371 before the Battle of Leuctra. This would be made all but impossible with the success of this campaign. It is not inconceivable that all these factors were brought before the Theban assembly, which subsequently voted in favour of sending a general levy into the Peloponnesus with Epameinondas at the helm.

Probably around March or April, the army gathered together. With the primary objective being without a powerful army, the major problem for the Boeotian army, as usual, was getting into the Peloponnesus. Mt. Oneum was at this time guarded by a force of mercenaries under the command of the Spartan, Naucles, and another force under the Athenian, Timomachus. The assault on the mountain in 368 had proven to be a dangerous and difficult endeavour for the Boeotians and Epameinondas had no desire to once again take the same risk. Because of this he decided upon an alternative tactic to secure safe passage for his army. As the defenders were expecting attack to come from the north, he secretly sent word to the Argives, requesting them to take the pass from the south. In compliance with this, Peisias, the Argive general was given a force of 2,000 hoplites and set out for the Isthmus. Upon arrival, after scouting the area, Peisias determined that the defences were carelessly maintained (ἀμελουμένην), he therefore unhesitatingly decided to attack one of the passes at nightfall. The defence probably occupied the passes of Maritsa and Stanotopi on the eastern

734 Stern (1884), 205; Swoboda (1900), 2694-2695; Cary (1933), 95.
735 Curtius (1872), 465; Underhill (1900), 282; Hammond (1959), 503-504.
side of Mt. Oneum.\textsuperscript{736} Xenophon states that the pass on the hill above Cenchreae was taken (τὸν ὑπὲρ Κεγχρείων λόφον), which is most likely to be Stanotopi.\textsuperscript{737} This was the logical choice of the two passes, given the laxity of the defence, the Stanotopi pass was a considerably shorter climb and therefore the most convenient. The night attack was successful and Peisias secured the defences before awaiting the arrival of the Boeotian force. He had prudently brought enough supplies for seven days: more than enough time for Epameinondas and his men to meet them (Xen. \textit{Hell.} 7. 1. 41).

Once the Boeotians had cleared the Isthmus they assembled with the rest of the allies in Arcadia, probably near Nema as they had done in 369.\textsuperscript{738} Xenophon states that all of the allies (πάντες οἱ σύμμαχοι) gathered together (Xen. \textit{Hell.} 7. 1. 42). These were undoubtedly the Peloponnesian allies, which included Argos, Messene, Elis, Arcadia and perhaps Sicyon. Arcadia’s quiescence to the call to arms automatically served as acknowledgement of Theban superiority, essentially achieving the underlying purpose of the expedition. It is likely that the Arcadian government was not, at this stage, in a position to oppose Theban \textit{hegemonia} with hostility. This may have been the result of factionalism within the Arcadian assembly\textsuperscript{739} or perhaps they were simply prudently biding their time until they could secure additional support. In one fell swoop, Epameinondas had symbolically restored, albeit temporarily, the recent breakdowns in the unity of the alliance. The success of the campaign and the inclusion of more alliances would further serve to secure their position.\textsuperscript{740} After the allied force rallied together, they marched for Achaea.

At this point the question now arises as to the route that the invaders took, which, to my knowledge, has not yet been thoroughly examined in sufficient detail. Buckler has asserted that from Nema Epameinondas marched to the coast before making his way to Rhium where the Corinthian Gulf’s northern shore is roughly two and a half kilometres distant. From there he may well have sent small detachments across the gulf to the Aetolian cities of Naupactus and Calydon, which had been held by Achaean garrisons. Then he

\textsuperscript{736} For these passes, see above, 151-152.

\textsuperscript{737} Stroud (1969), 140-141 n. 20; Buckler (1980a), 187-188.

\textsuperscript{738} Buckler (1980a), 312 n. 7.

\textsuperscript{739} On Arcadian factionalism in the 360s, see Thompson (1983), 149-160, though he does not include this specific instance in his discussion.

\textsuperscript{740} Buckler (1980a), 188.
continued along the coastline, further southwest, past Patras and finally to Dyme.\textsuperscript{741}

Considering the lack of discussion, it is worth assessing whether or not there is good reason
to accord with Buckler’s understanding of the campaign since alternatives are undoubtedly
possible. Our sources for the route the army took are fairly scanty and non-specific. On
Xenophon’s silence, we can rely only on Diodorus’ statement that Epameinondas liberated
the cities of Dyme, Naupactus and Calydon (Diod. 15. 75. 2). To add to this, we have a small
fragment of Ephorus’, which confirms the arrival of the army at Dyme (Ephorus \textit{FGrH} 70 F
84 = Steph. Byz. \textit{Dyme}).\textsuperscript{742} Thus we essentially have only two pieces of information from
which we can reconstruct the campaign: one, the army went to Dyme; two, they had to be in
a position, which allowed them to make contact with Naupactus and Calydon.

From this it is easy to see Buckler’s logic. Because the hills in Achaea are so
precipitous the primary way to commute through Achaea is along the coastal road. Travelling
along this route from Nemea would then have been the most efficient way to cross the
country.\textsuperscript{743} The assumption that the army marched to Rhium has clearly been made because
this is without a doubt the best spot to send detachments to Aetolia. Then from Rhium,
Epameinondas could simply have continued along the same path to reach Dyme. If this was
indeed the route that was taken, further speculations may be presented. Because the Thebans
had previously gained influence in Sicyon, it would be likely that said city and its port would
have been their first coastal destination, as they could camp and resupply there. Thus, from
Nemea, they could have taken the same route they had previously taken in 368, along the
Nemea River, past Phoebia.\textsuperscript{744} From the port of Sicyon, it is nearly 100 kilometres to Rhium,
a journey that would have taken several days. Then, having spent an uncertain amount of
time at Rhium, organizing affairs in Naupactus and Calydon, the army marched to Dyme,
which is a journey of about 30 kilometres.

\textsuperscript{741} Buckler (1980a), 188. See below, 197, for the location of Dyme.
\textsuperscript{742} See Parker \textit{BNJ} 70 F84. A fragment of Daimachus is often associated with this event as well
(Daimachus \textit{FGrH} 65 F1 = Schol. to Hom. \textit{Il}. 2. 494), see Jacoby (1926), 15; Buckler (1980a), 312 n. 8.
However, Stylianou (1998), 481, notes its context is mythological and it is not known if Daimachus wrote
about fourth century history. Also see Engels \textit{BNJ} 65 F1. Regardless of this, the fragment does not provide
any useful information for the campaign of 366 and may therefore be safely put aside.
\textsuperscript{743} Leake (1830b), 411-412.
\textsuperscript{744} See above, 155-156.
However, the plausibility of his assertions notwithstanding, there is not enough evidence to confirm that this was the route taken. There are, in fact, one or two factors, which may have compelled Epameinondas to consider a different possibility. It ought to be noted that the coastal road would have been easily defensible at the numerous points where the hills reach the sea, making the road narrow. With a sufficient force, it would be easy enough to prevent the passage of even a large army. Though Epameinondas may not have been concerned about the Achaean’s military capabilities, the potential for danger along this route would surely not have been lost on him. As well as this, because of the proximity of the sea with the mountains for the majority of the journey there is little space for crops to grow. The army would have therefore been required to send bands of soldiers inland to obtain supplies.

If, for a moment, we assume he took a different path, what then was another viable option? At first glance, marching into Achaea via Pellene appears to be a possibility: the city had also fallen under Theban influence in 368 and, being on the eastern end of Achaea with a nearby port, it could have made a useful base of operations. But on further inspection of the topography, the inland paths heading west from Pellene are precipitous and impractical for large bodies of soldiers. The fact that the city had been left under Theban influence unchallenged is testimony to its isolation from the rest of Achaea. Nor would an attack from the south be a likely candidate, as previously mentioned, it was not considered an option because of the northern Arcadian mountains and can therefore also be dismissed.\footnote{Anderson (1954), 82.} There is one more possibility that may be examined. For the most part navigating an army through Achaea is a challenge for any army, one that may prove more difficult than worthwhile; however, the entrance through Elis into Achaea, along the west coast, is a wide, flat plain. Because of this the settlements in this area could scarcely defend themselves against an attack by a large land force. It is possible that Epameinondas instead marched his army across Arcadia into Elis and then invaded Achaea from the southwest.

As is clear, there are only two practicable routes in which to march a large army on the offensive into Achaea. Regardless of what one might prefer, there is no way to conclusively prove which way Epameinondas went; however, a brief comparison of both options may serve to indicate the most sensible choice. By going through Elis and Arcadia,
unlike the coastal road, the army would have been in no danger of attack and supplies from allied settlements and farms were likely to be abundant. There could also have been a certain element of surprise: whether or not the Achaeans were well aware of the oncoming invasion is not obvious but the route the army would take to enter the country could well have been kept a secret, and prudently so. In fact, the evidence may well indicate this. Though Diodorus offers no real details about the manner in which the campaign was conducted, the fragment of Ephorus might: he says, “When the army arrived at Dyme, at first, the Dymeans, being terrified…” (Ephorus *FGrH* 70 F84 = Steph Byz. *Dyme*). Wickersham has suggested that this fragment, albeit a portion of a sentence, infers that the Dymeans were at first fearful of the approach of the invading army before being relieved to discover that there would be no bloodshed. The fragment clearly comes from Ephorus’ account of the campaign as no other known military venture involves the approach of an army to Dyme in the fourth century or earlier.

There are at least two important abductions that can be drawn from this fragment. Firstly, Ephorus states that the Dymeans were fearful (καταπλαγέντες) in the face of the approaching army. Though the fragment is incomplete and we cannot determine the exact nature of their fear, it would be fair to suggest, as Wickersham did, that they were surprised and uncertain of the army’s intentions. Now when applying this factor to our two different routes, certain questions emerge. If they had taken the coastal road, they were using the main highway of Achaea, passing several ports and many of the major settlements, including the capital, Aegeum. According to Buckler’s understanding, before reaching Dyme, Epameinondas had already been to Rhium and sent detachments to secure Naupactus and Calydon. With this logic Dyme would have been the very last place the army marched to, a journey, which would have taken many days. If then, they had taken the coastal road, how is it possible that the Dymeans were still fearful of the invaders? Surely word would spread quickly throughout the country and, after marching its entire length without any hostile

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746 παραγενομένης δὲ τῆς στρατιάς εἰς τὴν Δόμην πρῶτον μὲν οἱ Δυμαῖοι καταπλαγέντες... See Parker *BNJ* 70 F84.
747 Wickersham (1994), 146.
748 Although a significant naval battle occurred nearby during the Peloponnesian war in 429/8 (Thuc. 2. 84. 3).
749 The political capital had previously been Helice until it had been destroyed by a tsunami caused by an earthquake in 373 (Strabo 8. 7. 2; Paus. 7. 1. 24. 6; Diod. 15. 49. 1-6; Polyb. 2. 41. 7). See Anderson (1954), 75, 87; Prandi (1989), 43-59.
engagements, what reason would they have had to be fearful? It appears more likely that the presence of fear amidst a city from an oncoming army is more consistent with its initial arrival into the country of Achaeia at a point when there definitely would have been uncertainty over the invaders’ intentions. Furthermore, if the army had already marched to Aegeum, where the federal council stood, there would scarcely be any need to send the army to Dyme, which was a city of relative unimportance, other than its proximity to Elis. Of course, one might argue that Ephorus’ statement is rhetorical; however, this point is irrelevant to my argument. It is, in the same context, unlikely that Ephorus would denote the fear the Achaeans had from the invaders at the end of the campaign, when fear would have been most rife at its onset.

My second abduction, admittedly, is something of a stretch, but with consideration one might consider it logical. The nature of the fragment indicates that it is a portion of a relatively detailed account of the campaign. As can be observed, Ephorus is describing the approach of the army to Dyme, as opposed to the brief account of Diodorus, who merely names the cities that were liberated. However, it is likely that Diodorus used Ephorus as his source for the campaign, thus providing us with a condensed version of Ephorus’ account. Now, when Diodorus lists the cities, which were ‘liberated’, he does it in this order: Dyme, Naupactus and Calydon. On the surface one would not dare presume that the order of events could be determined by a list that Diodorus wrote, but there may be reason. On the likelihood that Ephorus’ account was substantially longer, i.e. at least a few sentences, we may guess that he provided no such list, instead actually describing how each city was secured by the army, as he clearly did for Dyme. Diodorus, on the other hand did not have the space to go into so much detail, he therefore decided to outline the major achievements of the campaign. If, considering the nature of note taking and paraphrasing, one is compelled to compile a list of names, places, facts, etc, it is not difficult to admit that one would invariably write them in the same order that they find them on whatever work they are reading. The same principle, in this case, may be applied to Diodorus. When he wrote his brief account of the campaign, he was reading Ephorus and therefore probably listed the cities that were liberated in the same order that Ephorus narrated them. It may also be added that Naupactus is a coastal city in Aetolia, whereas Calydon is further inland: some four kilometres from the sea. It is therefore likely that Naupactus was liberated first: this factor is wholly consistent with my argument.
Of course, this level of interpretation may be a step too far, but at the very least this discussion demonstrates that Buckler’s assumption that Epameinondas used the coastal road to enter Achaea should not be accepted without due consideration. Thus, because of the previous arguments I have made, I will proceed under the assumption that the army marched into Elis before heading north and arriving at Dyme.

The army appears to have reached the city of Dyme, which is most frequently associated with ruins in the vicinity of the modern town of Kato Achaia, without any resistance from the locals. The Dymeans were naturally shocked and fearful of the surprise presence of a large foreign army, but their fear would have quickly been quelled once they had learned that bloodshed could be easily avoided. Diodorus tells us that the city was liberated (ἤλευθέρωσεν) from the Achaeans (Diod. 15. 75. 2). Although we should not naturally interpret his phrasing at face value, it is curious that the ‘liberation’ of Dyme is categorized similarly to Naupactus and Calydon. While the latter two cities are not in Achaea, making their occupation by Achaean garrisons a situation for a potential ‘liberation’, Dyme on the other hand was one of the original Achaean cities. By all accounts Dyme was one of the 12 major cities that made up Achaea. Considering this, it must certainly be a mistake to refer to the Theban occupation of the city as ‘liberation’. Indeed, it is likely that Diodorus did this for convenience in his condensation of the event, as well as his lack of concern for such detail. We may then reasonably conclude that the city was occupied for its strategic value, being the westernmost Achaean city and the closest to Elis.

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750 Leake (1830a), 160-163, originally concluded that the modern town of Karavostasi is the best candidate. In agreement with this are Smith (1873c), 795; Philipson (1905), 1878. However, some argument has been made in favour of Kato Achaia, which is now the current consensus. See Duhn (1878), 72-79; Frazer (1898d), 135; Bölte (1912), 2785; Bölte (1937), 2436; Pritchett (1980), 269-270; Pritchett (1985), 233 n. 369; Morgan and Hall (1996), 186-187; Morgan and Hall (2004), 481.

751 Hdt. 1. 145; Polyb. 2. 41; Strabo 8. 3. 2.

752 Stylianou (1998), 481, speculates that Dyme was garrisoned due to a large pro-democratic population, which is possible, but there is no further evidence for this. See also Robinson (2009), 135-147, and, in agreement, see Kralli (2017), 8, 36 n. 47. Hamilton (1959), 505, asserts that Dyme had previously been under Elean control; however, there is no evidence for this either. Freitag (2009), 24, suggests the ‘liberation’ was due to the propagandistic way the Thebans portrayed themselves, which may be true for Dyme, but for Naupactus and Calydon it depends very much on perspective.
Having succeeded in the initial stages of the campaign, Epameinondas had intentions to manage Achaean influence in northern Greece. As mentioned above, the obvious place to do this from was at the promontory of Rhium. It is then likely that, from Dyme, the army marched to Rhium along the coast, via Patrae, a journey of around 36 kilometres. Along this route the land between the sea and the inland hills is wide enough for the army to have comfortably marched uninhibited the entire way. It is possible that they made a stop in Patrae as it would seem imprudent to simply pass it by, but without any evidence to indicate this, it must remain mere speculation. Rhium, situated in modern day Rio, was the name of the promontory, which, along with the promontory in Aetolia, Antirrhium, forms the entrance to the Corinthian Gulf. Both points lie about two and a half kilometres from one another (in spite of inaccurate ancient calculations), making it the narrowest strait between Achaia and Aetolian/Ozolian Locris. As there was apparently a temple of Poseidon in the area, there was likely to be a small township dependent upon it. From here it would have been simple enough to send some form of detachment over to Aetolia.

This detachment may have consisted of both soldiers and emissaries: perhaps even including boeotarchs, as others could well have been present. They sailed to the port of Naupactus and, either sending a separate expedition or, from there, travelled west to the city of Calydon, which lay about four kilometres inland on the western bank of the river Euenus (Plin. Nat. Hist. 4. 3; Strabo 10. 2. 21). Both of these cities, by this time, had undergone changes of sovereignty on a number of occasions. According to Homer, Calydon was originally an Aetolian city (Hom. Il. 2. 638-640, 9. 529-531, 13. 216-218). Then, around 389, during the Corinthian war, the Achaeans garrisoned the city in response to a threat from the Acarnanians, who were being helped by the Athenians and Boeotians (Xen. Hell. 4. 6. 1); however, Xenophon states that the people of Calydon had previously been made Achaean citizens, which implies a somewhat earlier influence for which we cannot be certain.

753 Thuc. 2. 8. 3; Strabo 8. 2. 3; Plin. Nat. Hist. 4. 6; Steph. Byz. Piöv. For Rhium see Dodwell (1819), 126; Leake (1830a), 147-150; Smith (1873a), 13; Philipp (1914), 844-845.
754 Though the sources give a figure closer to 11 kilometres, the site of Calydon is normally associated with the remains at modern Kurtagá, at the spur of Mt. Aracynthus, see Leake (1835), 533-538. For more recent work on the site see Rhomaios (1930), 258; Dyggve et al. (1934); Dyggve and Poulsen (1948); Dyggve (1951), 360-364; Knell (1973), 448-461.
755 The Achaeans may have been acting on instructions from Sparta and the Peloponnesian League, see Hohman (1908), 25; Larsen (1953), 804.
Naupactus was originally part of Ozolian Locris but around 457/6 the Athenians removed it from Locrian control and resettled it with Messenian exiles from the Peloponnesus. The relationship between the Messenians and local Naupactians was good enough for them to form a *sympoliteia* (*IG IX*² 1 fasc. 3 IX) and also maintained a loyal alliance with the Athenians throughout the Peloponnesian war, providing hundreds of troops on a number of occasions (Thuc. 2. 9. 4, 3. 75. 1; Diod. 12. 48. 1, 13. 48. 6). After the Athenian defeat at Aegospotami, the Messenians were then driven from Naupactus by the Spartans and given back to the local Locrians, sometime between 401 and 398. From this point we do not know when Naupactus came under Achaean influence, but Merker has reasonably surmised a possible date of 389, during the same campaign that Calydon received a garrison. Thus by 366, Achaean control had been firmly established in both cities.

What motivated Epameinondas to liberate these cities can only be speculated upon, but the reason seems clear enough. Both Calydon and Naupactus were originally Aetolian and Locrian cities respectively and both of these countries were, at this time, allied to Thebes. Having secured Achaea, a dispute of ownership over these cities could well have emerged; therefore, in order to please his allies, Epameinondas probably deemed it prudent to return the two cities to their original seats of power. From this he would gain the goodwill of both his allies and potential bases of operations, plausibly keeping in mind future designs for naval control over the Corinthian Gulf. Perhaps more importantly, removing Achaean foreign influence was likely to have an adverse effect on their power and economy, in particular since Naupactus was such a strategically significant port.

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756 Thuc. 1. 103. 1-4; Diod. 11. 84. 7; Paus 4. 24. 7. See Hornblower (1991), 160-161, for this episode.
757 Nielsen (2002), 60-61 esp. n. 87.
758 Diod. 14. 34. 2; Paus. 4. 26. 2; 10. 38. 10. The dates of these events have long been in dispute, see Merker (1989), 304 n. 6, for a summary of the evidence and scholarship. For the Messenian colony at Naupactus in general see Luraghi (2008), 188-194.
759 Oldfather (1935), 1989, purports possible Aetolian control sometime between 401-398 and the Theban arrival in 366; however, this is based only on the dispute regarding the interpretation of Xenophon’s use of ἀπολαβέν, which could infer that the Aetolians wished to either ‘recover’ Naupactus or ‘receive’ it. Because there is no further evidence to confirm the former, Merker (1989), 304, prefers the latter.
761 See above, 123.
762 Merker (1989), 305-306. Stylianou (1998), 481; Freitag (2009), 23-24, think that both cities were given to the Aetolians, but they fail to recognize Locrian claims over Naupactus and their friendship with Thebes.
Following these events, while the bulk of the army was probably still around Rhium, the Achaean government decided to send their own emissary in order to agree upon the terms of surrender. Epameinondas then, according to Xenophon, used his own personal influence to conduct affairs. He allowed them to maintain their oligarchic government under the condition that they would swear to an alliance in which they had to follow the Thebans wherever they go, i.e. as a subject-ally (Xen. Hell. 7. 1. 42). This arrangement had previously been used with Sicyon and Pellene and had subsequently been successfully ratified by the Boeotian Confederacy. Epameinondas had little reason to believe that it would not work now. Unfortunately, in spite of these previous successes, the events that followed would demonstrate the failings of Epameinondas’ informality.\(^{763}\) However, at this stage, the invasion had been, for all intents and purposes, an utter success. Indeed, he had achieved his plans without any apparent drop of blood on Achaean soil: an ideal outcome for all parties involved. Once these things had been arranged, the army disbanded and returned home.

The Reversals

When Epameinondas returned to Thebes his arrangements in Achaea were immediately criticized in the assembly. Representatives from Arcadia and others were sent to Thebes in order to repeal Epameinondas’ settlement, arguing that his arrangement had been for the benefit of the Spartans. As a result, the Theban assembly resolved to send harmosts to Achaea who dismantled the oligarchic government and drove out the aristocrats before establishing a new democratic rule (Xen. Hell. 7. 1. 43). This episode offers many insights into the nature of Arcadian and Achaean federalism, disunity within the Theban assembly and, perhaps, Epameinondas’ pragmatism but failure as a diplomat; therefore, meriting some discussion.

There were at least two different groups involved in convincing the Thebans to reverse their conclusion of affairs in Achaea. Xenophon bluntly names the Arcadians as one, but for the other he simply refers to them as ἄντιστασιωτῶν.\(^{764}\) Underhill suggests that it

\(^{763}\) Buckler (1980a), 188-189, 312 n. 9.

\(^{764}\) Brownson (1921), 147, misleadingly translates this as "Achaean opposition".
either refers to Theban opponents of Epameinondas or Achaean democrats though prefers the latter because Xenophon follows his statement with “ἐδοξε θηβαίοις.” Though not exactly a strong argument, this position has been generally accepted in varying degrees, but most scholars maintain that opponents of Epameinondas were likely to be instrumental in supporting the case in the assembly. Once accepting the involvement of these opponents, it is also easy enough to suppose that Menecleidas was the leading voice in support of the reversals. Though Thompson is right in cautioning anyone to make such an assumption, Buckler has offered some fairly plausible arguments for this specific case. However, the truth behind this assumption is less important than the implications of the event. Xenophon’s words seem to indicate that Epameinondas’ settlement was not seriously questioned until the arrival of the Arcadian emissary and Achaean democrats. Once they had given their case to the assembly a window of opportunity was opened for Epameinondas’ political opponents to further damage his reputation. As Menecleidas is the only one of these explicitly named in the sources, it is likely that he was the leader of this theoretical faction. Menecleidas’ activities may be interpreted as the role of a single person or merely that of the most enthusiastic proponent of a group, which continually attempted to thwart the policies of Epameinondas and Pelopidas. If he existed as the sources indicate, he would undoubtedly have taken part in this event, but, if not, his name can still be reasonably used to represent a group of politicians at odds with Epameinondan policy.

The question of motivation is also important to establish as, on the surface, the original settlement appears to have been largely accepted by the people of Achaea, just as had been achieved with Sicyon and Pellene. Why then did the Arcadians and the other factions involved find it necessary to appeal the settlement? The most controversial aspect of this question is the position of the Arcadians, which has received some attention by scholars over the last half century. In a compelling article, Roy highlighted the ongoing competition between oligarchs and democrats throughout the 360s: most particularly we can see such a

765 Underhill (1900), 282.
767 Thompson (1983), 153 n. 18.
trend in the politics of Arcadia. From the unification of the Arcadian federation, in 370, the league was founded upon heavily democratic and anti-oligarchic ideals. This is evident primarily in Tegea where most of the oligarchic supporters were either exiled or massacred. Although the other major Arcadian city, Mantinea, became democratic peacefully, the oligarchs there must have been fewer in number and probably recognized the value of taciturnity as a means of self-preservation. Then, throughout the decade, in its foreign affairs the league consistently offered support to fellow democrats in the Peloponnesus. The reversals in Achaea can certainly be interpreted as one such situation: Achaean democrats, dissatisfied with Epameinondas’ settlement, appealed to Arcadia for support, which was accepted due to Arcadian zeal for democracy.

Thompson, however, later offered a different interpretation: in his article on Arcadian factionalism he argues that Lycomedes, having recently affronted the Theban assembly by walking out of the peace talks, was not likely to have asked the Thebans to intervene in the Peloponnesus by sending harmosts to Achaea. Rather, he suggests, that this delegation would have been sent at the behest of a rival Arcadian faction that was in favour of improving relations with Thebes and now influenced the Arcadian assembly over Lycomedes and his supporters. Buckler, on the other hand, is perfectly happy to envision Lycomedes’ role in this episode, though he interprets his motivation to be an attempt to create negative propaganda out of Epameinondas’ actions without necessarily expecting the Thebans to concede. More recently Roy has reassessed the topic and has presented a fair point, which may refute Thompson’s argument to an extent. He notes that, in the words of Xenophon, in establishing his settlement, Epameinondas presented his allies with a fait accompli, which they were likely to resent given their recent misgivings with Theban hegemonic activities. The Arcadians then, as Roy suggests, had three options: one, accept the settlement and oligarchic control of Achaea; two, attempt to overthrow the oligarchs without Theban approval, potentially jeopardizing the alliance; three, request that the Thebans reverse

769 Roy (1971a), 569-590. However, the fully democratic nature of the Arcadian League has been questioned, see above, 120 n. 496.
770 See above, 120.
772 See above, 187.
774 Buckler (1980a), 191.
the settlement. Though they may not have wished for Thebes to send harmosts to Achaea, the latter choice was safest and still resulted in Achaeian conversion to democracy. Roy further points out (and rightly so) that there is no evidence that Lycomedes or any other Arcadian “ate humble pie”, as Thompson put. Having considered all the arguments the question of motivation, perhaps, should not be put down to a single factor. It is more than clear that the Arcadians felt duty bound to support foreign democratic factions. However, Epameinondas’ fait accompli may have been taken as another attempt to secure Thebes’ position as hegemon, which they had apparently attempted in the previous year with the peace conferences. Regardless of the reason for Arcadia’s desire for Achaeian democracy, these actions symbolically undermined Theban power and damaged the reputation of their most eminent military leader, even accusing him of arranging affairs for the benefit of the Spartans.

For the Boeotians, although the motivations of such people as Menecleidas may be put down to rivalry against Epameinondas and disdain towards his aggressive policy, the reasons why the reversals were ratified by the Theban assembly cannot. Buckler imagines what Menecleidas had to achieve in order to convince them: because of recent events the Thebans were likely to be very unhappy with the Arcadians and overcoming this would have been the initial challenge for the orator. He may have attempted to induce sympathy from the Thebans for their ‘fellow’ democrats and argued that it was necessary for more stringent measures to be made in order to insure Achaean fealty. It may further have helped that the Arcadians appeared willing to accept the new settlement with Theban harmosts. If we stop here it may be easy to establish that the assembly’s motivation was to support democratic factions and, perhaps, to help maintain the ailing Peloponnesian alliance. But on dissection, the nature of Theban foreign policy is not so simple to detect. Unlike Arcadia, the Thebans did not support foreign democrats so vociferously: they maintained the oligarchs in Sicyon

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775 Roy (2000), 322-323.
776 For other recent discussions of Arcadian commitment to democracy see also Nielsen (2002), 486-490; Robinson (2011), 41-44.
777 It may seem incredible that Epameinondas, one of the most vigorous anti-Spartan leaders in Thebes, could be accused of helping the Spartans; however, it becomes more believable considering that such an accusation had already been laid against him after the second invasion of the Peloponnesus, see above, 167-169. It is clear that Menecleidas was a skilful orator, capable of sowing subtle seeds of slander; thus, repeatedly arguing in such a way could slowly induce credulity to the accusations.
778 Buckler (1980a), 191.
and Pellene and allowed a tyrant to control much of Thessaly. Thus, it is not likely that the Boeotian League had any established policy for democratic support. In more general terms, what can be noted is that they tended to support foreign federal states such as in Messenia, Thessaly, Elis, Arcadia and Argos. This tendency has led some scholars to argue that Thebes had a federal program in which they reshaped foreign federal constitutions in the image of their own.\textsuperscript{779} However, Beck has since provided a compelling refutation, concluding that Thebes’ foreign policy was not motivated by ideological or constitutional concepts, but rather, was determined by power politics.\textsuperscript{780} The argument he presented essentially demonstrates that Thebes had no major influence on the constitution of any federal state with the exception of Thessaly, which was generally oligarchic, and Messenia, whose constitution, as earlier noted,\textsuperscript{781} is unknowable. The only evidently democratic federal states were Arcadia and Argos, both of which had been established before the Boeotian League took an active interest in Peloponnesian affairs. Even Elis appears to have been rather politically ambiguous in its ties to either democracy or oligarchy.\textsuperscript{782} Because of this, referring to the Boeotian-Peloponnesian alliance as a “coalition of democratic states”\textsuperscript{783} may serve to skew our understanding of each respective political manifesto during this period.

Other than hatred towards Sparta it is impossible to deduce a specific ideological concept that bound this alliance together. However, there is at least one abduction that can be made: the Thebans’ support for federal states is abundantly apparent. Without any need to consider particular political ideals we can safely assert that the Boeotian League found it prudent to be allied with other federal states. What this tells us about the events of 366 is that the concern of the Theban assembly was not that Epameinondas had allowed Achaea to remain oligarchic or that they desired to reframe the Achaean federation in their own image, indeed, the settlement was perfectly consistent with all the other ties of friendship they had made.

\textsuperscript{779} In particular see Beister (1986), 131-153.
\textsuperscript{780} Beck (2000), 331-344. Also see Funke (2009), 1-14.
\textsuperscript{781} See above, 143.
\textsuperscript{782} Roy (1971a), 572-573. Cf. Swoboda (1900), 2401-2403. See Robinson (2009), 135-147, for Elis’ government by the early fourth century. More recently Bourke (2018), 190, has envisioned the Eleans, following the revolts of 370, to have adopted a system in which democrats and oligarchs could both run for office and affect policy.
\textsuperscript{783} Robinson (2011), 58.
previously established.\footnote{This is true in the sense that the Thebans allowed all those who joined the alliance to maintain their existing government. The one exception is Thessaly, which had had its constitution altered with help from Pelopidas, see above, 163. However, this was not achieved under particular duress as Pelopidas did not have an army with him; therefore, it appears that the Thessalians willingly allowed this influence.} We may then conclude that the assembly did not ratify the reversals because of any particular disapproval of Epameinondas’ arrangement. It may even be suggested that if the Achaean were generally happy to remain oligarchic, the Thebans were happy to allow them.\footnote{While the Achaean democratic faction may have had significant support from the populace, the fact that there is no indication of internal stasis before the arrival of the Boeotians and that the new democratic government was so vigorously and efficiently removed suggest that the oligarchs still enjoyed the majority of influence.} This, to my mind, leaves but one major factor, which was the primary reason for the ratification of the reversals: the Arcadians. Though Buckler has reasonably asserted that the Arcadians would have been unpopular in Thebes at this time, it may be recognized that the Thebans, understandably, did not want to further jeopardize the alliance; therefore, accepting Arcadia’s request was diplomatically pertinent. Furthermore, the primary motivation for the campaign in the first place was to attempt to reassert dominance over the Arcadians. Having achieved this, the Arcadian request for reversals, though defiant, could not be cast aside lightly. It is even possible that Epameinondas accepted the changes without a large degree of objection, knowing the necessity of maintaining the alliance. This conclusion is far from certain as we just do not know enough about the Boeotian League’s foreign policies; however, this was undoubtedly a significant factor and the only one we can be certain of.

For the Achaean side of things, the subsequent events must be recounted. Following the instalment of the Theban harmosts, removal of the oligarchs and the accession of the democrats, the exiles fled and banded together, probably not far away.\footnote{Buckler (1980a), 191; Freitag (2009), 24, both suggest Elis, though there is no particular reason to think this and, given that the Eleans were allied to the Thebans, it seems unlikely they would harbour fugitives.} They seem to have gathered a large number of followers and plotted their reprisals. It is not certain how long it took for them to act but Xenophon gives us the impression that events occurred rather rapidly. The oligarchs marched throughout the country and removed the harmosts and democrats from each Achaean city. Once this had been achieved the Achaean renewed their alliance with Sparta and endeavoured to fight on its side with increased vigour (Xen. Hell. 7. 1. 43). These events indicate the existence of a democratic movement within Achaea, which
had a reasonable amount of support; however, their attainment of power, being characterized by the imperialistic actions of Thebes, would have caused them to be criticized as traitors. The oligarchs, playing upon these sentiments, revitalized their support from the populace. Robinson argues that popular government had fairly large support in Achaea due to the potential for a strong democratic presence in Dyme.\textsuperscript{787} But a single, garrisoned, city in Achaea is not an indicator for widespread support throughout the country. It is made even more difficult to confirm considering the ease with which the oligarchs returned to power. Either the democratic leaders were vilified enough to lose all support or they never had it in the first place.

That the Achaeans felt the actions of the Thebans were treacherous, there is little doubt;\textsuperscript{788} but perhaps they were also conceived as imperialistic. The question then arises as to whether the Thebans were beginning to show signs of imperialism. Underhill noted that the use of ἄρμοσται was very similar to the way in which the Spartans conducted their hegemony.\textsuperscript{789} However, Buckler argues that, like at Sicyon, harmosts were used to protect their allies from attack, in this case, from themselves. They must have been aware that the exiled aristocrats could attempt to regain their power; it was therefore appropriate to provide them with assistance.\textsuperscript{790} Indeed, it was traditional for the hegemon to protect its allies; in this instance they were simply being consistent with this role. However, more striking is the fact that they interfered with the internal political structure of Achaea, which may be considered a breach of their autonomy. But during this period of history, the exact way in which people perceived autonómia is far from certain. Indeed, both the hegemonies of Athens and Sparta over the previous century or so defined autonómia to suit their own agenda and had

\textsuperscript{787} Robinson (2009), 144-145. See above, 197 n. 752.
\textsuperscript{788} Buckler (1980a), 192, states that "it would be an injustice to accuse the Thebans of perfidy", a statement, which Bosworth (1992), 142, understandably disagrees with. If he meant ‘perfidy’ in the military sense, it is worth noting that according to customary international humanitarian law, perfidy is defined as “acts inviting the confidence of an adversary... with the intention to betray that confidence”. See Doswald-Beck and Henckaerts (2005), 1368. The key word here is ‘intention’. As argued above, the Thebans had no intention of betraying the Achaeans until extenuating circumstances altered their position. However, there is no ancient equivalent term and it is doubtful that there were such specific definitions of what constituted a breach of human rights. It is, therefore, anachronistic to think in these terms. The Thebans did, however, go back on their word, which is certainly perfidious in the broader use of the term.
\textsuperscript{789} Underhill (1900), 282.
\textsuperscript{790} Buckler (1980a), 192-193.
conducted and justified their actions under the guise of their own interpretations. Even the exact nature of what was deemed imperialistic cannot be ascertained: it is unlikely that the Athenian Empire was considered to be in the same league as the Persian Empire, which did actively control the internal affairs of its subjects. Just as the definition of autonomia was not strictly defined nor was the role of the hegemon. The Thebans may have, in some sense, overstepped their bounds, but their actions were consistent with those of previous hegemonies and, provided this position was not ‘frequently’ abused, it was not likely to outrage the majority of Greek people. It should be further noted that, as suggested above, they acted more out of necessity than with any intention of tightening their control over an ally and we have no reason to think that Achaean autonomy would not be returned once a safe transition of government had been established.

The whole affair seems to demonstrate the foresight of Epameinondas. He was keenly aware that most city-states were generally content to change their allegiances as long as their internal affairs were not interfered with. On the other hand, however, he was also short-sighted in his conduct. By presenting the Arcadians with a fait accompli and giving them no opportunity to contribute to the initial settlement, he provoked them into challenging his actions. It may be argued that the subsequent oligarchic revolution was the result, not specifically from the instalment of democracy, but from the Theban betrayal of Epameinondas’ settlement. It is possible that the Achaeans would have been happy with a democratic government provided it had been established in the original settlement. In this case, the failure of the entire affair may, to some extent, be blamed on Epameinondas himself, who was not willing to allow the Arcadians any influence in settling affairs. But, in the end, the nature of the whole episode is obscure and any conclusions must remain relatively speculative.

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791 For the use and terminology of autonomia see Bosworth (1992), 122-152.
792 For an attempt to define and distinguish hegemony with empire see Scheidel (2006), 2-12. For hegemony in ancient political thought see Fontana (2008), 80-83. For the varying uses of hegemony in historical literature (i.e. Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon and Ephorus) see Wickersham (1994).
Chapter 8
Boeotian Dominance in Mainland Greece 366-365 B.C.

Following the re-instatement of oligarchy in Achaea, the remainder of 366 and some of 365 were characterized by a number of other significant events in which the Boeotian League played the role of hegemon and expanded its territory. However, Epameinondas is nowhere specifically attested for this period and we can in no way be certain of his level of involvement. He was, on the other hand, at the very least, keenly aware of these events and would have adopted a particular political stance on each of them. There are also a number of contextual factors that make Epameinondas’ involvement highly plausible, particularly for the Oropus affair and the Peace of 366/5. The debacle with Euphron may be more of a stretch but still merits some investigation since it is indicative of the political atmosphere at Thebes. In spite of the dearth of evidence on the general, a close study of the period implies his active participation throughout.

Sicyon and the Fall of Euphron

Though Epameinondas is nowhere mentioned during this episode, the course of events led to the Theban assembly itself where he was undoubtedly present. It is, then, certainly worthy of examination, particularly establishing the involvement of Thebes during the whole affair. Since 368, Euphron had ruthlessly established his dominance over Sicyon, effectively reigning as a dictator. It is interesting, however, that during this period a Theban harmost, apparently with a garrison, occupied the city (Xen. Hell. 7. 2. 11). This may have served as a conditional check on Euphrone’s power, but we are given the impression that he was able to implement his policies unhindered. Indeed, the harmost’s role

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793 See above, 179.
794 Whether he was considered an outright tyrant or not has been debated at length and certainly depends upon one’s perspective, see Meloni (1951), 10-33; Ste. Croix (1989), 297; Lewis (2004), 65-74; Lolos et al. (2011), 69, for revisionist views.
795 See Griffin (1982), 72, who accounts for the harmost's presence.
appears to have been primarily military, i.e. preventing insurgence and spearheading military endeavours.

Thus, in 366, this harmost led a joint expedition against Phlius, which had, over the last two years, successfully repelled three separate attacks, mostly instigated by the Argives (Xen. Hell. 7. 2. 4-15; Diod. 15. 40. 6). The attack consisted of troops from Pellene, Sicyon, the Theban garrison at Sicyon and the mercenaries of Euphron. With a combined force of probably over 4,000 soldiers the Phliasians were heavily outnumbered and should not have proven too difficult to overcome. However, with quick reactions, the Phliasians met the attackers when their forces were divided and managed to rout them before they could unite (Xen. Hell. 7. 2. 11-16). Not long after this the Sicyonians experienced further setbacks: while they were fortifying Mt. Thyamia, which lies just to the northeast of Phlius, the Phliasians, with the help of Athenians under Chares, attacked the worksite and occupied the fort themselves. This allowed for easy communication and transportation of supplies between Corinth, Phlius and Pellene.

During the same year, internal strife also arose at Sicyon. The Arcadian general, Aeneas of Stymphalus, believing that the situation at Sicyon could no longer be tolerated, took his army up to the acropolis and called together all of the aristocrats and those who had been exiled. These proceedings caused Euphron to panic and he fled to the port and presumably occupied it with his mercenaries. He then sent for Pasimelus from Corinth and, through him, gave possession of the port to the Spartans, while offering some paper-thin excuse for having betrayed their trust in the first place (Xen. Hell. 7. 3. 1-3). It is interesting to note that the Arcadians seem to have conducted this while the Theban harmost and garrison were supposedly still in Sicyon: it seems unlikely that Aeneas would occupy the acropolis of a city that was currently occupied by an allied force. Griffin assumes that the garrison was removed from Sicyon and later reinstalled, but he offers no explanation for this.

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796 Twice in 369, see above, 155 n. 620, and once again in 368, see Ray (2012), 72. Despite the heroic nature of Phlius' achievements there has not been a dedicated study for these four campaigns with the exception of a topographical assessment, see Pritchett (1969), 96-111.

797 For the engagement see Ray (2012), 74.

798 Xen. Hell. 7. 2. 17-23; Diod. 15. 75. 3. Pellene, by now, had inexplicably become friendly with Phlius and joined their Achaean brethren by re-establishing their alliance with Sparta, which Xenophon later confirms (Xen. Hell. 7. 4. 17).
Alternatively, Lolos et al. suggest that the harmost may have invited Aeneas, perceiving that Euphron was becoming a threat.\(^{799}\) One possibility may be that the coup could have occurred while Euphron and the Theban garrison were occupied with the expedition against Phlius: both parties could have returned to Sicyon and discovered what had transpired. This would account for a temporary absence of the harmost and may explain the ease with which Euphron occupied the port, considering he had his mercenary force with him. He did not, however, hold the port for long as the nearby Athenians who were supporting his position were recalled to Attica to help with affairs at Oropus (Xen. *Hell. 7. 4. 1*).

Before long *stasis* broke out in Sicyon between the aristocrats and the populace, presumably over issues of property and wealth. Euphron consequently hired a force of mercenaries from Athens and used them to occupy the city with the help of the people. However, the Theban harmost and garrison still held the acropolis, which he could not take without giving Thebes a *casus belli* against him. He therefore set off for Thebes with the intention of buying their support; though, unfortunately he was followed by some of the aristocrats who assassinated him upon the Cadmea, before he could speak to the Theban council. The perpetrators were apprehended and brought before the *boule*. Only one of them pleaded guilty to the charges but gave a defence, which secured their freedom (Xen. *Hell. 7. 3. 4-12*).\(^{800}\) Underhill had previously suggested that the officials who voted upon the trial (*τοῖς ἄρχοσι*) were in fact the boeotarchs,\(^ {801}\) which, if true, would indicate that Epameinondas himself was likely to have been directly involved. However, as Swoboda and Hermann have noted, the case was tried in the local Theban *boule*, which dealt only with criminal offences that occurred within Theban territory. Thus, the archons referred to were most likely to be the polemarchs, who had authority over local judicial matters.\(^ {802}\) We can therefore conclude that, despite the political nature of the trial, Epameinondas could not have had any direct legal authority in deciding the verdict.

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\(^{799}\) Griffin (1982), 73; Lolos et al. (2011), 70.

\(^{800}\) On these events see Meloni (1951), 29-31; Griffin (1982), 74.

\(^{801}\) Underhill (1900), 289.

\(^{802}\) Swoboda and Hermann (1913), 253, 267 n. 4. See also Bonner and Smith (1945), 20-21; Buckler (1980a), 32.
On the other hand, someone with the political authority of Epameinondas was not likely to have been entirely absent or neutral in this whole affair. There are a few things we can surmise: because the third Boeotian invasion was likely to have occurred after Euphron’s seizure of power and his authority was not challenged, it is probable that Epameinondas had no real grievances with the coup. Whether or not the Theban harmost and garrison occupying Sicyon were there at his behest we cannot say, though it is possible that they were stationed there during the second or third invasion. Having said that, the harmost was perhaps not a close associate of Epameinondas, considering his apparent military incompetence. We might note that others who are known to have been within Epameinondas’ political circle (i.e. Pelopidas, Gorgidas and Pammenes) all demonstrated astuteness in military matters. I would then conclude that Epameinondas did not personally select the harmost himself. As for the trial of Euphron’s killers, it is doubtful that Epameinondas had any personal issue with the murder per se, though it would not be surprising if he was incensed that it occurred on the Cadmea of Thebes. But since he had previously demonstrated no particular preference (in foreign states) as to whether power remained in the hands of the aristocrats or the people (i.e. oligarchs or democrats), provided they were allied with Thebes, he may have happily remained neutral in this situation. Euphron would subsequently be venerated by the people of Sicyon who apparently benefited from his reign (Xen. Hell. 7. 3. 12). This indicates that, despite the tyranny, the *stasis* really was a matter of democracy versus oligarchy.

*The Oropus Affair*

While events in Sicyon and Phlius were progressing in the Peloponnesus a territorial dispute was instigated when Themison, the tyrant of Eretria, occupied the city of Oropus, which lay on a bay on the north coast of Attica, nearly 20 kilometres east of Tanagra, where the modern town of Skala Oropou now stands. According to our sources, Themison and one Theodorus, along with some exiles from Oropus, seized the port city, before calling for aid from Thebes in response to an oncoming force from Athens. The Athenians accordingly received no help from their allies and abandoned the territory to the Thebans pending some
form of mediation. Though, on the surface, the incident appears rather minor, the consequences were far reaching and involved a major military sortie by both Athens and Boeotia, the latter plausibly led by Epameinondas himself.

Oropus had a long history of disputed possession: initially it belonged to Boeotia, then was transferred into Attic territory probably sometime during the late sixth century. In 411 the city was captured by the Boeotians (Thuc. 8. 60), though they are said to have maintained the Oropians’ autonomy. In 402, however, because of civil strife, they were again brought under Theban influence, this time being awarded citizenship in the Boeotian Confederacy. The inhabitants were then relocated, albeit briefly, to a settlement seven stadia inland, possibly where the modern town of Oropioi lies, approximately two and a half kilometres to the southwest. After the Corinthian war and the King’s Peace in 387/6, it is generally suggested, and appears likely, that the city was returned to Athenian control. Although it was never officially incorporated into the Athenian demoi, it remained in their control until the present situation.

Because of this historical claim and the probability that Themison would not risk facing the might of Athens alone, Buckler has suggested that the plan was masterminded by the Thebans. While Themison could well have conceived the plot by himself, Buckler is undoubtedly correct in asserting that he must have been counting on Theban support. Indeed, we may speculate that Thebes had been desirous to reclaim Oropus ever since the reformation of the Boeotian League; however, it seems apparent that they were never quite willing to risk direct conflict with Athens on the borders of Attica and Boeotia. Instead, by allowing a third-party figure to initiate the conflict, they could not be held directly responsible and would therefore be able to disassociate themselves if the endeavour failed.

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803 Xen. Hell. 7. 4. 1; Diod. 15. 76. 1; Isoc. 5. 53; Aeschin. 2. 164. schol., 3. 85. schol. Dem. 18. 99. schol.; Paus. 1. 34. 1.
804 As suggested by Buckler (1980a), 194; Buckler (2003), 335.
805 Paus. 1. 34. 1; Diod. 12. 65. 3. The geography of Oropia clearly makes it part of Boeotia, see Fossey (1988), 29.
806 Frazer (1898b), 463, suggests around 507 when the Athenians conquered Chalcis and Euboea (Hdt. 5. 77).
807 Diod. 14. 17. 1-3. Smith (1873), 496. Leake (1835), 445-446, preferred to associate this site with the original city; however, cf. Lolling (1885), 350-358; Frazer (1898b), 465-466.
On the other hand, if successful, they could then support the perpetrators and assume control of the city while claiming their historical right to it.\textsuperscript{808}

The Thebans may have also had a more practical motivation for taking Oropus: plans for implementing a large-scale Boeotian navy\textsuperscript{809} were undoubtedly already underway and the port of Oropus could harbour at least 42 ship, which it had previously done in 411 (Thuc. 8. 94-95). Not only would this provide them with an additional port, it would also have been strategically valuable; thus serving to help inhibit Athenian control of Euboea as well as diminishing the efficiency in which Athens could be supplied with its grain.\textsuperscript{810} The apparent alliance with Eretria, the port of which lay about seven kilometres to the north on the southern coast of Euboea, would have further secured this situation, giving the Thebans control of the Euripus Strait.

Bearing these factors in mind, a basic reconstruction of the series of events may be attempted. Though we cannot be certain where the coup was initially conceived, it is clear that we must begin with Themison and Eretria. Like Oropus, Eretria had variously been in and out of Athenian control over the centuries. Supposedly the inhabitants were originally of Ionic descent, coming from an Attic Eretria, thus sharing some kinship with Athens; however, Strabo indicates that some accounts say they came from Triphylian Macistus in Elis (Hdt. 8. 46; Strabo 10. 1. 10). Nevertheless, their perceived connection with Athens and the Ionic states was apparent when they sent five ships with the Athenians in support of the Ionian Revolt in 499 (Hdt. 5. 99). Unfortunately, this move had dire consequences for Eretria, which was subsequently sacked and its inhabitants removed in 490, during the first Persian invasion of Greece (Hdt. 6. 100-102). The prisoners were luckily freed by Darius and resettled in Cissian territory (Hdt. 6. 119). By 485, Eretria was being rebuilt and settled by some of its former inhabitants, as well as some migrants from Attica. Nonetheless, the failure of their Athenian allies to support them during the war resulted in an ingrained feeling of betrayal throughout the fifth century, which is evident in the failed Euboean revolt of 446 for which they were harshly punished (Thuc. 1. 114),\textsuperscript{811} and its successful revolt in 411 (Thuc. 8.

\begin{footnotes}
\item[808] Buckler (1980a), 193-194;
\item[809] See Chapter 9.
\item[811] See Cartwright (1997), 72-73.
\end{footnotes}
Following the Peloponnesian war, little is said about Eretria except that it was part of the Athenian League in the 370s until the cities of Euboea sided with Thebes late in 370 (Xen. *Hell.* 6. 5. 23). Then by 366, in the current situation, we find it under the control of the tyrant Themison. From this brief survey of Eretrian history we can conclude that the inhabitants had very little reason to feel compelled to side with Athens despite their distant kinship with them.

Some scholars have noted that the revolt in 411 bears much similarity with the events at Oropus in 366. Thus, in the context of the two cities, it is worth viewing the earlier event as a precursor to the latter. Early in 411, the Boeotians took Oropus with help from the Eretrians and some of the locals (Thuc. 8. 60). If the Eretrians and the rest of Euboea were determined to further diminish the threat of Athens, then this was a tactically sound decision. It is clear that control over both cities was vital for control of the Euripus and this is confirmed when, later that year, the Spartan fleet under Agesandridas attacked the Athenian fleet that was stationed at Eretria. The inhabitants again aided the invaders by removing the city of its supplies, thus drawing many of them away from the city. With the Athenians caught off guard they signalled to the Spartan fleet, which had anchored at Oropus, to attack (Thuc. 8. 95). With such close proximity between the two cities they were ideal for attacking one another: Agesandridas realized this and the Athenians apparently did not. We may surmise that the Eretrians helped to deprive Athens of Oropus in order to secure the strait and prevent reprisals in the wake of their rebellion. As Hanson asserts, the capture of Oropus enhanced the “success of insurrection” in Euboea.

The distant memories of these events would still be vivid for many of the older citizens from both states in 366 and, for others, the chance to replicate their fathers’ deeds was now appealing. If Themison desired for Eretria and the rest of Euboea to be protected from Athenian influence, it was necessary to secure Oropus and, to do this, they would need help from Thebes. Diodorus gives us the impression that Themison meant to keep Oropus for

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812 On the destruction of Eretria and its subsequent re-establishment see Walker (2004), 270-289.
813 *IG II² 43. 80:* the exact dating of each states’ inclusion on the stele of Aristoteles is far from certain, see Baron (2006), 379-395.
814 E.g. Grote (1872), 274 n. 3; Buckler (1980a), 193-194.
815 Hanson (2005), 236.
himself by saying that Thebes’ retaining of the city was an unexpected loss. This is hardly likely considering he could never have expected to hold the city without continued support from the Thebans. It is more probable that he sent word to Thebes offering to take Oropus for them, provided they sent a force to support him. A plot was then conceived employing help from one Theodorus (Dem. 18. 99) and exiles of Oropus. Considering the initial coup came solely from Eretria, we may speculate that the exiles used inside help to enter the city before providing the Eretrians access to the port, perhaps by silencing the watchmen. Either way, with no description of the attack itself, it was undoubtedly a quick and successful affair.

The immediate response from Athens was to send their entire force to Oropus. It cannot be exactly determined what sort of figure, but the army could have been a similar size to the 12,000 soldiers sent to aid the Spartans in 369. Though perhaps less would be expected considering how readily they would avoid aggressive confrontation with the Boeotian force. It is apparent from the subsequent trials in Athens that Chabrias was made general and his political ally, Callistratus, tagged along. They also sent for Chares, who had been assisting the Phliasians against attacks from Sicyon, along with a request for support from their Peloponnesian allies, but unfortunately none of them responded (Xen. Hell. 7. 4. 1). Under the circumstances this is unsurprising: Phlius and Corinth were too bogged down by their own neighbouring enemies to consider sending support since it would weaken their own defences. While the Athenian force mustered, the Eretrians must have fortified themselves within the city and sent word to Thebes.

The Thebans probably mustered a general Boeotian levy, numbering up to 8,000 hoplites, plus cavalry. We may well have found Epameinondas at the helm of this sortie, though there is no conclusive reason to assume this. It is, on the other hand, reasonable to speculate on his presence merely due its plausibility. Of the known Theban figures at this time, only Epameinondas had good experience in leading large scale military operations: Pelopidas would have been quite capable but, by this stage, he had not led more than 1,000 soldiers in battle and Pammenes would not rise to such prominence until after Epameinodas’

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816 Diod. 15. 76. 1: παραλόγως ἀπέβαλεν.
817 Xen. Hell. 7. 4. 1: στρατευσαμένων δὲ πάντων Ἀθηναίων.
818 See above, 145.
819 See below, 216.
death (Diod. 15. 94. 2). It is further clear from the botched rescue operation in 368 that Thebes was lacking in experienced replacements.\footnote{See above, 172-174.} In order to guarantee their success it would have been a prudent choice to elect him as general.

With the arrival of both forces the potential for a large-scale engagement was in the air. It was clear that the Athenians would have to defeat the Boeotian force if they wished to regain control of the city. Chabrias was an experienced general and he undoubtedly realized the dangers of a head on attack against the veterans of Leuctra. This decision was supported by Callistratus, who apparently advised Chabrias to leave Oropus under Theban control \cite{Aristot. Rhet. 1. 7. 13}. We may assume that a series of diplomatic discussions occurred between the two sides, which resulted in the agreement that the city would remain under Theban control until the city’s ownership could be decided by third party arbitration \cite{Xen. Hell. 7. 4. 1}. For Epameinondas and the Thebans the result could not have been better: they had increased their influence and obtained a strategically significant port without bloodshed. However, for Chabrias and Callistratus, though they had acted prudently against a superior force and only unofficially accepted Theban occupation of Oropus, they were brought to trial in Athens. According to various sources, Callistratus succeeded in gaining acquittal by giving one of his most eloquent speeches ever.\footnote{Dem. 21. 64; Plut. Dem. 5. 1-3; Vit. Dec. Orat. 8/844b; Diog. Laert. 3. 1. 23. On the trial see Sealey (1956), 195-196; Cawkwell (1961), 84.}

The significance of this event should not be underestimated. Boeotia’s historical connection with Oropus indicates that the city was on the agenda for incorporation into the league as far back as the establishment of the federal assembly after 379/8. More important was the effect it had on the overall political situation on mainland Greece: the Athenians, being incensed at their allies’ lack of support, were compelled to seek alliance elsewhere. The Arcadians too were desirous of change and, on hearing of this situation, Lycomedes convinced the myrioi that an alliance with Athens would be propitious. He subsequently journeyed to Athens where his negotiations were successful. Unfortunately for Lycomedes, on his return home, he was assassinated by Arcadian exiles \cite{Xen. Hell. 7. 4. 2}. Nonetheless, the συμμαχία was established, which put the Arcadians in the awkward position of being
allied to Athens while technically being at war with Athens’ allies (i.e. Sparta, Corinth, Phlius, etc.) and vice versa.

There is one further point to address in relation to the Oropus affair and that is whether or not the issue ever actually underwent arbitration. According to a fragment of Agatharchides’ account of European affairs, some form of arbitration did indeed take place between Boeotia and Athens concerning an unknown territory referred to as Sidai (Agatharchides FGrH 86 F 8 = Athen. 14. 64). Epameinondas, who was naturally representing his country, demonstrated that the territory was truly Boeotian by presenting a pomegranate to the Athenians and asking them what they called it. The representative of Athens said they call it “ῥοάν” to which Epameinondas replied that, in Boeotian dialect, they say “ἰον” (i.e. “σίδη”). He therefore proved the Boeotian origin of the territory’s name, especially considering its abundance of pomegranate trees. Whether or not Sidai can be associated with Oropus, it is impossible to say with certainty; however, using the process of elimination and probability, Buckler has concluded that there is no other territory on the border between Attica and Boeotia that could be associated with this instance. Indeed, from what we know of events during Epameinondas’ career, the Oropus affair is the only one in which a plausible connection can be made. Buckler’s sole reservation on the historicity of the fragment is in determining an appropriate arbitrator. However, I see less issue with this: firstly, it is worth speculating when the arbitration was likely to take place. It could plausibly have occurred after the Peace of 366/5 (see below), probably just a few months later, when some states (i.e. Corinth and Phlius) were allowed to attain a neutral position and would therefore no longer be compelled to choose sides (Xen. Hell. 7. 4. 10). Such neutral states would have been the perfect candidates for arbitration. We may thus conclude that, though some Athenian orators would later deem the action illegal, the fragment indicates that Oropus ultimately fell into Boeotian hands in a relatively peaceful manner with no small input from Epameinondas.

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822 Buckler (1977), 333-334.
823 Buckler (1980a), 313 n. 19.
824 Isoc. 5. 53; Aeschin. 2. 164. schol., 3. 85. schol. Dem. 18. 99. schol. Aeschines and his scholiast state that Oropus was taken while εἰρήνης οὖσας. This is manifestly incorrect as Athens was officially at war with Boeotia. Stylianou (1998), 483, suggests that Aeschines merely meant that there was no fighting in that part of Greece. Another possibility is that, because Oropus was never officially an Athenian deme, it was never technically at war.
The Peace of 366/5

Once the alliance with Arcadia had been concluded Demotion convinced the Athenian assembly to tighten their control over Corinth (Xen. Hell. 7. 4. 4). Aristotle indicates that the Corinthian oligarchs feared a democratic revolution (Arist. Pol. 5. 1306a. 21-4), but their loyalty to Sparta may have been waning as well. Chares was then sent with the fleet to Cenchreae. News of this reached the Isthmus first and the Corinthians acted quickly: they sent the local Athenian garrisons away and refused Chares entry into the port, before hiring mercenaries to further protect their territory (Xen. Hell. 7. 4. 4-6). Despite the fact that the Athenians had not used force to secure the city, Corinth decided it was time for their part in the ongoing conflict to conclude. Thus, they sent word to Thebes requesting a peace to be granted to them and any other of their allies that so desired (Xen. Hell. 7. 4. 6-7). This was great news for the Thebans especially considering the recent failure at Susa. If they could successfully conclude a treaty the collapse of the Peloponnesian League would be complete. Epameinondas would undoubtedly have been delighted at the prospect of further isolating Sparta from their allies.

The nature of this treaty has been the subject of some controversy for nearly a century on account of a divergence in the sources. Diodorus’ brief account states that it was a Common Peace (κοινὴ ἱρήνη) initiated by the Persians (Diod. 15. 76. 3). On the other hand, the more detailed Xenophon portrays the peace instead as a more localized treaty between Thebes and several of Sparta’s remaining Peloponnesian allies (Xen. Hell. 7. 4. 6-11). The primary issue centres on whether or not Diodorus’ account can be trusted or not, an issue which is unlikely to ever be fully resolved. However, since there are some issues with the most recent discussion of the peace and because the nature of the peace directly underpins the situation in Thebes (and by implication Epameinondas), it is appropriate to reappraise the matter.

With few exceptions, scholarship has tended to accept that both accounts refer to the same treaty but that Diodorus records inaccurate information; therefore, he is generally

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825 See Salmon (1984), 378-379, for these events.
rejected in favour of Xenophon. By and large this position is adopted without discussion; however, the exceptions that do indeed justify their position are varied and deal with a range of contextual issues. Grote provides an early rejection of Diodorus by discrediting both of his assertions: first, there is no other indication of Persian intervention on Greek affairs since Pelopidas’ return from Susa with the king’s rescript about a year before, though he asserts that the present treaty appears to be based on this rescript. Secondly, he also rejects the possibility of a Common Peace since the war continued between the major parties involved. The strength of these arguments notwithstanding, they have essentially formed the basis of subsequent scholarship on the issue; thus the questions: ‘could the Persians have been involved?’ and ‘could the treaty have been a Common Peace?’ are the focus of this discussion.

One factor plausibly relevant to this peace, as suggested by Cawkwell, is in determining when Athens’ claims to Amphipolis and the Chersonesus were recognized in an assembly by the Persian king and the other Greek poleis. These proceedings are mentioned only by the Athenian orators Demosthenes, Aeschines and Hegesippus, whose statements have been used in various arguments intended to associate them with known events. Aeschines explicitly says that a representative of Amyntas was present at the recognition of Amphipolis, which gives us a terminus ante quem of 369. Indeed, the majority of scholars agree with Accame’s suggestion of the conference in Athens in 369 for the event in which their claim was recognized. However, this is only mentioned in the context of a congress of the Greeks and he does not mention the Persian king or Chersonesus, which may open the possibility that the latter was recognized at a later date; indeed, the recognition of the Chersonesus is only mentioned in a single passage by Demosthenes that also does not include Amphipolis. Arguing along these lines Cawkwell points out that Athenian operations against Chersonesus did not begin until Timotheus had taken Samos in 365 (Isoc. 15. 112) and, because of this, their right to it must have been recognized not long prior. He then notes that Demosthenes states that all (πάντες) of the Greeks were present at the proceedings as well as

826 See Ryder (1957), 201 n. 6, 202 n. 3, for early bibliography.
827 Grote (1872), 279 n. 1, n. 2.
828 Dem. 9. 16, 19. 253; [Dem.] 7. 29; Aeschin. 2. 32.
829 For Amyntas’ death see above, 28.
830 Accame (1941), 165-167.
a representative of the Persian king, who had previously promised a rescript to Athens of the recent failed treaty in Susa (Xen. Hell. 7. 1. 36). \textsuperscript{831} From such context it would certainly appear apt to conclude that a Common Peace could have occurred around this period, which would make Diodorus correct and Xenophon incomplete.

This interpretation has, however, been challenged by a number of scholars. Ryder appears to disagree, though his only major criticism is that he thinks the royal rescript for Athens would not necessarily lead to a general treaty and it may instead have been a “separate conciliatory approach”. He also warns that we should be wary of Demosthenes’ use of πάντες. \textsuperscript{832} Sealey also disputes the conclusion; however, he only cites Cawkwell’s note on Aeschines’ passage referring to Iphicrates as the general against Amphipolis (Aeschin. 2. 27) and Demosthenes’ passage referring to Timotheus as the general against Amphipolis and the Chersonesus (Dem. 23. 149). Cawkwell merely states, as an addition to his previous argument, that these passages may reflect the difference in policy between Amphipolis and the Chersonesus. \textsuperscript{833} Sealey may be correct that Aeschines simply did not feel the need to mention the Chersonesus in relation to Iphicrates but he does not address any other aspects of Cawkwell’s argument and far from proves that “it is likely that the Athenians sought recognition of their claims to Amphipolis and Chersonesus at the same time”. His main argument is based on the arbitrary observation that the claims were initiated in a “revival of Athenian concern for the northern Aegean”; presumably he supposes this to be in the late 370s or early 360s. \textsuperscript{834} Later still Buckler has also expressed his reservations against Cawkwell: first, he notes that the date when operations against Amphipolis or Chersonesus began is not necessarily indicative of the date in which their claims were recognized, citing Athens’ later failure to act against Amphipolis when Philip offered it to Athens in 359 (Dem. 2. 6; 23. 116; [Dem.] 7. 26). He then proceeds to discuss the various problems associated with establishing a date for the recognition of Athens’ claim to both cities essentially concluding that it cannot be used as evidence for a Common Peace. \textsuperscript{835} However, neither Sealey nor Buckler seem to fully appreciate or account for the fact that the recognition of

\textsuperscript{831} Cawkwell (1961), 80-82. For the treaty at Susa see above, 184-189.
\textsuperscript{832} Ryder (1965), 139.
\textsuperscript{833} Cawkwell (1961), 81 n. 5.
\textsuperscript{834} Sealey (1976), 430.
\textsuperscript{835} Buckler (1980a), 254-256.
Chersonesus is not once mentioned in relation to the recognition of Amphipolis. Is it then wise to simply assume they occurred at the same time or can we at least be open to the possibility that they are distinct events?

More recently this distinction has received a great deal more consideration. Heskel further points out the possibility that the Greeks’ recognition of both territories could well have occurred separately from Artaxerxes’ recognition. We then have the overall potential for four separate events, which could have happened at a variety of different times. As we can see, when examining the scholarship, basically every known possibility has been argued at one stage or another. It has then become quite impractical to attempt to come to some definitive conclusion on the matter because we cannot rely on anything other than circumstantial evidence. It must be pointed out that not one of our major sources (i.e. Xenophon, Diodorus, Plutarch) offer us any real indication that Athens’ claims to either city actually happened. The one possible exception being the Persian king’s rider offered to Athens during the failed Peace of 367, which implies further diplomacy between Athens and Persia; however, we can neither be certain about the date of such negotiations or the subject. In the end it will always be something of a stretch associating known events with indeterminate events mentioned by Athenian orators some two decades post hoc. Thus, we must conclude that the date when the Greeks or the Persian king recognized Athens’ claim to the Chersonesus cannot be used as any kind of evidence in favour or against Diodorus’ Common Peace of 366/5.

836 Heskel (1997), 102-103. Dmitriev (2011), 405-406, admits to the possibility of this distinction but does not prefer it.

837 Earlier scholarship tended to place all these events with the peace conference of 371 in Sparta, e.g. Beloch (1922), 162. Hampl (1938), 18, opted for the Peace of 375/4. Accame (1941), 155-156, 165, believes the claims to both cities were made at Athens in 369, though he argues that the Persian king’s ratification could have occurred at a later date. Cawkwell (1961), 80-82, argued that the two cities were recognized separately by the Greeks, i.e. Amphipolis in 369 and the Chersonesus at the alleged Common Peace of 366/5, where he also believes the king’s ratification was made. Since then scholars have often opted for Accame’s conclusion, e.g. Sealey (1976), 430; Cargill (1981), 86 n. 8, though later Cargill (1995), 23-24, admitted that the date of the recognition of the Chersonesus is uncertain. Sealey (1993), 76, then proposed the alternative possibility of the peace at Athens in 371 after Leuctra for the recognition of both cities but asserts that the Persian king’s recognition was likely to have come later, probably after the failed Peace of 367. Heskel (1997), 102-103, believes the date when the Greeks recognized the claim to both cities is unknowable, but is adamant that the king’s recognition occurred soon after the failed Peace of 367 and thus in early 366. In the most recent assessment Dmitriev (2011), 400-406, appears to prefer the earlier suggestion of the Spartan peace in 371.
Another argument purported by Cawkwell concerns Isocrates’ *Archidamus*. This speech was essentially a rhetorical exercise put in the mouth of Archidamus, son of Agesilaus, and future Spartan king. It is set in the Spartan assembly and the young prince is addressing the Ephors in relation to the issue of whether or not Sparta should accede to a peace with Thebes that is being strongly advocated for by their allies and apparently many Spartans as well. The latest historical reference is to the death of Dionysius the Elder of Sicily (Isoc. 6. 45), which occurred sometime in the Spring of 367 (Diod. 15. 73. 4-74. 5) and since he lists Thebes’ destruction of Thespiae and Plataea without mentioning Orchomenus, which was destroyed around 365/4 (Isoc. 6. 27), it is reasonable to conclude that the speech is set sometime between those two dates. At this time, the only plausible peace treaty that Isocrates could be referring to is the current one under discussion. Because of this and its references to the peace, it should be considered additional evidence for our overall interpretation, as Isocrates was undoubtedly well disposed to write about it.

Cawkwell makes two observations about this speech, which he asserts add weight to Diodorus’ *Common Peace*. For the first it is important to note that the central focus for the speech’s argument concerns Sparta’s claim to the land and people of Messenia. It is made abundantly apparent that by accepting the terms of the treaty at hand, the Spartans would have had to recognize the autonomy of their former territory and slaves (e.g. Isoc. 6. 11, 13, 16, 81, 87). We must add that Diodorus later confirms that the autonomy of Messenia was at the forefront of discussions (Diod. 15. 81. 3). Now, during Archidamus’ ramble he points out that the Persians have possessed Asia for a much shorter time than the Spartans had possessed Messenia (Isoc. 6. 26). He then goes on to say, “they give up Asia to the barbarian, being its ancestral right” (Isoc. 6. 27). Cawkwell argues that, because of the present tense used, Isocrates is referring to a clause, which Xenophon fails to mention, in the current peace treaty that included the recognition of Persia’s right to the Greek states of Asia Minor. If this is correct, the clause could well be reflected in Diodorus’ account, which includes Persian involvement in the peace.

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838 Though we have no reason to assume that the *Archidamus* was actually written during this period, see Harding (1973), 137-139.
839 τοῦ μὲν βαρβάρος τῆς Ἀσίας ως πατρῴαν οὐσίαν ἀποδιδόσαν.
840 Cawkwell (1961), 82.
His second observation is about the uncertainty of the number of parties involved in
the peace. In the speech, Archidamus names only Epidaurus, Corinth and Phlius (Isoc. 6. 91), which Cawkwell argues is because the speaker is only concerned with the remaining
members of the Peloponnesian League. He also adds that Xenophon indicates that Argos was
involved (Xen. *Hell.* 7. 4. 11) and I would further add that Epidaurus is nowhere mentioned
by Xenophon in this instance. The inconsistency between the two sources at the very least
demonstrates that we cannot make an *argumentum ex silen* tio about the specific parties that
were included in the peace. Building on this argument Cawkwell states that the fact that
Archidamus says that the Athenians would save Sparta (Isoc. 6. 62) does not exclude the
possibility that they were involved nor would it matter if they were a party to a peace that
recognized the autonomy of Messenia as they certainly were in 362/1. By the same token
none of the evidence may be specifically used to exclude Persian involvement in the peace
especially since Archidamus does not hold any hopes for the Persians to lend support to
Sparta.

Unlike the previous line of reasoning, only a couple of arguments have since arisen
against these conclusions. Ryder asserts, for the first observation, that Archidamus could just
as easily have made the comparison with Persia’s claim to Asia if the peace was just a limited
rehash of the failed peace at Susa and need not necessarily include such a clause. As to the
situation with Athens he simply states that the Spartans could have felt that the Athenian
alliance with Arcadia had rendered their own alliance with Athens valueless. Other than
this, Dmitriev contented himself by simply stating that it is difficult to see how this evidence
“can confirm that the treaties made by these cities and Thebes in 366-365 represented a
Common Peace”. Of course we must again agree with these critics that Cawkwell’s
arguments do not in any way prove that the treaty was indeed a Common Peace; however, it
is also fair to say that not one of their arguments prove that it was not.

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841 It has been suggested that Epidaurus joined the peace in order to facilitate a considerable building
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842 Roebuck (1941), 43 n. 76, as reiterated in Kralli (2017), 35 n. 32, is skeptical of a Common Peace since,
he believes, it would have included recognition for Messenian independence. However, as has been
demonstrated, the *Archidamus* very much implies that this was the case.
843 Cawkwell (1961), 82-83.
844 Ryder (1965), 138.
Cawkwell’s final argument in favour of a Common Peace simply establishes a plausible context in which Athens would now accept such a treaty: the leading politicians, Callistratus and Chabrias had now fallen out of public favour since their failure at Oropus and, as their accuser, Leodamas, was apparently pro-Theban (Aeschin. 3. 139), public opinion may have swayed more favourably towards diplomacy with Thebes.\textsuperscript{846} Again, Ryder has criticized this context by saying that the pro-Boeotian nature of Leodamas says nothing of Athenian policy itself and, rather, he argues that Athenian policy had become more aggressive, considering the re-election of Timotheus, the alliance with Arcadia and the attempt to secure Corinth.\textsuperscript{847} Cawkwell later addressed these points and, without going into unnecessary detail, he more firmly established the plausibility of his context.\textsuperscript{848} It will suffice to add that none of these actions by Athens run counter to a potential treaty with Thebes and other mainland states, particularly as the attempt on Corinth occurred before said peace anyway. But, regardless of whether Athens’ involvement is plausible or not, it proves nothing in the end about the Common Peace and such a context could just as well fit into a more limited settlement with or without Athenian inclusion.

Since Cawkwell’s article over five decades ago, in spite of the majority of scholars remaining unconvinced, there have been at least three other discussions in favour of Diodorus’ evidence. Two of these emphasize the fact that a divergence with Xenophon is not necessarily evidence against Diodorus, especially considering how Xenophon is inclined to ignore the koine dimension of all peace treaties. Jehne adds that Ryder’s contention that it was not a koine eirene simply because Sparta and (probably) Athens were not included is only a criterion of a Common Peace from a modern perspective. Zahrnt further points out that, whether or not Athens and Sparta were involved is irrelevant to the propaganda that an alleged Common Peace meant for Thebes.\textsuperscript{849} Stylianou also argued in favour of Diodorus, emphasizing similar points to Jehne and Zahrnt, though, unlike them, he asserts that the Athenians were a party to the peace, which, if true may well confirm the treaty as koine. However, regardless of their involvement, Stylianou makes an important point concerning

\textsuperscript{846} Cawkwell (1961), 83-85.  
\textsuperscript{847} Ryder (1965), 138.  
\textsuperscript{848} Cawkwell (1972), 269 n. 4.  
Xenophon. Like Jehne and Zahrnt he states that Xenophon’s omission is not evidence against Diodorus, but he further explains that, since the autonomy of Messenia was recognized at this peace (Isoc. 6. 11), and since Xenophon had previously omitted to mention even the founding of that particular polis, it is no wonder that he would deign to record the legitimization of its status as autonomous.\footnote{Stylianou (1998), 485-485.}

Other than making various contextual arguments, the main reason that scholars cannot accept Diodorus’ Common Peace is, as Buckler says, “until Sparta’s participation in the supposed peace is proved – and Cawkwell has failed to do so – Diodorus’ report of a Common Peace made in 366/5 cannot be taken as accurate”.\footnote{Buckler (1980a), 254-255.} As I mentioned above, Jehne and Zahrnt asserted that the involvement of Sparta was not necessarily a criterion for a Common Peace. In the most recent assessment Dmitriev does indicate Sparta’s inclusion as important but does not address the argument itself in any detail: perhaps he feels it is not relevant?\footnote{Dmitriev (2011), 402,} But we must contend that it is perhaps the most relevant point, as no other argument for or against has been able to stand up to serious scrutiny. We need only look at other Common Peaces from this period of history to discover that the inclusion of Sparta was not necessary and was never likely. As we can see, in 375/4 and twice in 371, Thebes was excluded from three Common Peaces and in 362/1 Sparta was excluded. In each of these cases there is little doubt that these were indeed Common Peace treaties. By default, all of these instances indicate the superfluousness of Sparta’s involvement. Thebes did not require Sparta or Athens to enact a Common Peace. They already had Persia’s support from the previous peace attempt in Susa and, if this was indeed a rehash of that treaty, they could cite Persian involvement with or without their presence. More important, as Zahrnt asserted, was the propaganda value of the Common Peace: just as Sparta used Thebes’ rejection of the first peace in 371 as an excuse to make war on them, Thebes could now isolate Sparta from its allies in exactly the same way. We must stress that, even if Sparta was not a party to the peace conference, the evidence from Isocrates suggests that its allies requested permission from Sparta to accept the peace independently. This further indicates that the Spartans were indeed invited to attend but refused since they could not accept the autonomy of Messenia. In
the end it is not possible to prove whether the peace was common or not; however, as I have demonstrated, it is entirely possible that it was.

Conclusion

During this period the Boeotian League had functioned as hegemon of the federal alliance, albeit haphazardly, in the affair with Euphron; it had finally restored its pre-Corinthian War boundaries by seizing Oropus and had secured a militarily beneficial peace, that was also a political success since it properly recognized Thebes as the guarantor, which was a position the Spartans had previously held. It is apparent the general opinion of Sparta’s allies had changed considerably since the failure of the Common Peace at Susa. While, as I have argued above, Epameinondas may not have thought a settlement with the Spartans could be achieved at this stage, the conclusion of a peace, which removed their most significant remaining allies and recognized Messenian autonomy, in many ways, was the pinnacle of the general’s plans against Sparta. Though the Boeotian-Peloponnesian alliance would fragment later in the year with the Elean-Arcadian war, it cannot have been entirely obvious that this conflict was about to erupt. Indeed, as Hamilton has argued, the Peloponnesian League had truly been dismantled: of their remaining allies, the Spartans could now only expect to receive help from various groups of exiles, the Achaeans and a small number of poleis on the Argolid (such as Hermione and Troezen), which had generally contributed very little to the war effort. These successes explain why the Boeotian naval project was able to progress: since the threat of Sparta had been all but neutralized, Thebes could now revert its attention to Athens. The fact that Epameinondas acquired the backing of the federal council for the naval endeavour indicates that, whatever public favour was lost in his mishandling of the settlement in Achaea, he had regained the people’s support by 364. It is therefore reasonable to give some credit to Epameinondas for the Boeotian League’s foreign policy between late 366 and the early months of 365.

Chapter 9

The Boeotian Naval Project 366-364 B.C.

With the essential collapse of the Peloponnesian League, following the Peace of 366/5, the Thebans could now turn their attention to the power of Athens in the Aegean. Epameinondas announced in the assembly at Thebes his intention to construct a fleet in order to achieve supremacy over the sea. Without any apparent hesitancy the people voted in favour of the project and agreed to build 100 triremes along with the necessary dockyards to accommodate them (Diod. 15. 78. 4-79. 1). As we shall see, in 364, when this ambitious plan came to fruition Epameinondas travelled to several of the most prominent Greek islands hoping to convince them to join the Boeotian federal alliance. Our details on the entire affair are unfortunately quite sparse, relying predominantly on Diodorus, which has led to disagreement among scholars on a number of points that significantly affect how the whole event should be interpreted. It is then doubtful that any reconstruction could possibly satisfy all scholarly grievances; however, in the past few decades there have been a number of relevant epigraphical discoveries, which have enhanced our understanding of the topic. This has led to recent studies that offer several fresh and insightful interpretations. In this chapter I have attempted to combine all of these ideas together in order to present an exhaustive study of the Boeotian naval project.

Diodorus and Epameinondas’ Speech

Our main source for the construction of the Boeotian navy survives in a brief account in Diodorus. He states that Epameinondas addressed the assembly in a speech that urged them to strive for naval power:

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854 Naval scholars prefer the term *trieres* since the Latin *trireme* may have been a distinct ship; however, as this is not a technical study of Greek oared ships the more familiar term will be used.
During these occurrences Epameinondas, the Theban, being held in great esteem by his countrymen, in a gathering of the assembly addressed the citizens, compelling them to secure supremacy of the sea. Amidst this speech, which had been considered for a long time, he proposed that such an enterprise was both in their interests and feasible, stressing in particular that for those who are powerful on land it is easy to secure rule over the sea: for the Athenians, in the war against Xerxes, filled 200 ships themselves while being subject to the Spartans who provided 10. Having presented on this and many other things appropriate to the occasion he persuaded the Thebans to secure supremacy of the sea (Diod. 15. 78. 4).855

It is apparent that Diodorus has heavily condensed a speech that his source (probably Ephorus) put in the mouth of the Theban general.856 As has been well established, Epameinondas’ oratorical abilities were renowned and tested against some of the best. There is little doubt that he put on a commendable performance when he spoke in front of the Theban assembly since convincing the demos to adhere to his plan may have been difficult, particularly considering the incredible expense of constructing and fielding a large fleet. Whether or not Diodorus’ source provided a genuine Epameinondas oration is unverifiable, but we have no reason to doubt that it retain an echo of what was actually uttered. In any case, it is liable to reflect some contemporary fourth century views on the Boeotian naval enterprise.

On examination, what stands out in particular is that the purported intentions of the endeavour were to strive for hegemonia and arche of the sea.857 Though it is possible that these are Diodorus’ own terms there is contemporary evidence that exhibits similar rhetoric. Within a couple of decades Isocrates would also use arche in reference to the Boeotian navy (Isoc. 5. 53). Aeschines too asserted that Epameinondas, speaking to the Theban assembly, said that they should remove the Propylaea at Athens and place it on the entrance of the Cadmea (Aeschin. 2. 105). The connection is not explicit but, since the Athenian Propylaea

855 ἂμα δὲ τούτοις πραττομένοις Ἐπαμεινώνδας ὁ Θηβαῖος, μέγιστον ἔχων τῶν πολιτῶν ἄξιομα, συναχθείσης ἐκκλησίας διελέξθη τοῖς πολίταις, προτερπόμενος αὐτούς αντέχεσθαι τῆς κατὰ θάλατταν ἱγμενίας, διελθὼν δὲ λόγον ἐκ χρόνον πεφροντισμένον ἑδείκνυε τὴν ἐπιβολὴν ταύτην συμφέρονσάν τε καὶ δυνατήν, τὰ τῇ ἄλλῃ προφερόμενος καὶ διότι τοῖς πεζῇ κρατοῦσι ρήμιον ἐστὶ πεποίησασθαι τῆς τῆς θαλάττης ἀρχῆς: καὶ γάρ Αθηναίοις ἐν τῷ πρὸς Ξέρξην πολέμῳ διακοσίως ναὸς ἱδίᾳ πληροῦντας Δακεδαιμονίως δέκα ναῶς παρεχομένους ὑποτετάχθαι. πολλά δὲ καὶ ἄλλα πρὸς ταύτῃ τῇ ὑπόθεσιν οἰκεῖως διαλέξθες ἐπίσευ τοῦ Θηβαίως αντέχεσθαι τῆς κατὰ θάλατταν ἀρχῆς.
856 Cawkwell (1972), 270-271; Stylianou (1998), 494.
857 While hegemonia is somewhat ambiguous, arche is frequently used by Diodorus to mean ‘rule’. In a decree, dated to this period, proscribing Theban ἱγμενονία over Oreus/Histiaea, it is apparent that the term is used to refer to leadership in military matters, see Aravantinos and Papazarkadas (2012), 239-254.
represented Athenian naval power, most scholars agree that Aeschines is referring to the same event. While the image is stirring and plausibly fits the kind of message that Epameinondas wished to convey, it is doubtful that Epameinondas did in fact speak of attaining supremacy of the sea, as he was hoping to take advantage of the disaffection of Athenian allies. Certainly, he would not want to give said allies the impression that Thebes was intending to replace Athens as hegemon of the sea. However, the impression that has been preserved for us is that which was felt in Athens itself as appears to be indicated by the statements of the Athenian orators. It has been argued that these sentiments are the result of a Theban propaganda campaign attempting to incite fear in the Athenians,\textsuperscript{858} which illustrates the genuine anxiety that Athens had concerning the pending Theban expedition. When news reached Attica of Epameinondas’ speech his words were undoubtedly exaggerated with the intention of spurring the Athenian populace into action. Thus, as we shall see, it is entirely credible that steps would be taken to prevent the success of the endeavour.

While Diodorus or his source’s rhetoric could have obscured the exact intentions of Epameinondas and the Theban assembly there may be, on the other hand, a semblance of actual Epameinondan rhetoric preserved in this brief condensation. The text indicates that a major theme of the oration was the argument that supremacy of the sea is easy when one is already dominant on land. To back up this claim he apparently referred to the Persian wars when Athens provided 200 ships for the Greek armada, while the Spartans only provided 10.\textsuperscript{859} Epameinondas is here making reference to the fact that, although the Spartans could only send a small amount of ships, they were still made the official leaders of the armada owing to the prestige of their superior land force. This, it has been argued, means that the Boeotians did not need to match the strength of the Athenian navy while they remained a formidable land power; instead a moderate fleet would be sufficient.\textsuperscript{860}

However, on analysis, the sentiment contains further illumination. Another possible reference to the speech is from Aristides who says that Epameinondas said that their advantage on land was useless unless they obtained control of the sea (Aristid. 11. 53). This

\textsuperscript{858} Cawkwell (1972), 270; Stylianou (1998), 494-495; Russell (2016), 66-68.
\textsuperscript{859} This is the number of triremes the Spartans provided for the Battle of Artemisium (Hdt. 8. 1). For the Battle of Salamis they sent 16 (Hdt. 8. 43).
\textsuperscript{860} Stylianou (1998), 494.
explicitly advances the idea that the power of Athens could not be rivalled without taking the fight to the Aegean. Grote,\textsuperscript{861} in reference to the speech, noted the similarities with two Thucydidean speeches: the first was Brasidas’ address in the Spartan assembly and the second was Hermocrates at Syracuse (Thuc. 2. 87, 7. 21). Both are exhortations for the respective poleis to strive for dominance in naval warfare. To this we may include Themistocles’ own successful attempt to convince the Athenians for the same, though no such speech is preserved (Hdt. 7. 144; Plut. Them. 4. 1-2). We thus observe the recurring scenario in which a nation is compelled to strengthen their navy in the face of an enemy that already possesses one: i.e. Athens against Persia, Sparta against Athens, Syracuse against Athens and Thebes against Athens. Following these events we continue to see a similar pattern with Jason of Pherae’s plans for the construction of a fleet and Alexander of Pherae’s naval raids against Athens in 362,\textsuperscript{862} Philip of Macedon’s utilization of a fleet against Athens in the 350s\textsuperscript{863} and, later, Rome’s construction of a strong fleet against Carthage in 261 (Polyb. 1. 20-21).\textsuperscript{864} It is clear from these factors that the people of the ancient Mediterranean understood that the only way to defeat a naval power is to have a powerful navy. Epameinondas knew that, as in the Peloponnesian war, they would never suppress the power of Athens by land alone.

In addition to this, by implication, the sentiment also implies that a sea power is made all the more effective by a strong land force. This idea bears much precedent in the history of classical naval warfare and is recognized as such by modern scholars.\textsuperscript{865} Thus Epameinondas was not only saying that naval supremacy was achievable, he implied that because of their land superiority they would have a distinct advantage over the Athenians. While Athens had by no means an insignificant land force, they were undoubtedly inferior to the Boeotians and, in recent years, Athenian military activity on land had been primarily of a defensive kind. Thus there may have been a genuine strategic facet he was attempting to convey, much like in his address to the army before the Battle of Leuctra using the analogy of

\textsuperscript{861} Grote (1872), 290.
\textsuperscript{862} Westlake (1935), 112-113, 153-154.
\textsuperscript{863} Murray (2008), 35-36.
\textsuperscript{864} We may add that, in the early years of Alexander the Great’s campaigns the Aegean theatre of the war against Darius constituted a significant threat to the success of the invasion. On this see Ruzicka (1988), 131-151.
\textsuperscript{865} Morrison et al. (2000), 60, 63, 67, 75-76, and n. 12, 87-88, 93, 165.
the snake.\textsuperscript{866} It is easy to see how such rhetoric could compel the Theban assembly to vote in favour of the expedition.

Grote, continuing his reconstruction of the assembly at Thebes, imagines that Epameinondas’ plan received some opposition from Menecleidas.\textsuperscript{867} Plutarch and Nepos both tell us that Menecleidas criticized Epameinondas for thinking he had attained the glory of Agamemnon. In response Epameinondas claimed that the comparison was not unfounded since Agamemnon took 10 years to take Troy while he defeated the Spartans in a single day at Leuctra (Plut. *Pel. De Se Ipsum* 9/542b-c; Nep. *Epam.* 5). While the evidence is anecdotal and we have no definitive reason to equate it with the naval expedition presumably Grote thought that, since Agamemnon also took a navy across the Aegean, this is an appropriate context for the altercation. Indeed, we can expect that there was some opposition and, if so, it would have been spearheaded by Menecleidas, who was against Epameinondas’ continued aggressive policy. However, since there is no sign of this opposition in Diodorus, it will not have amounted to anything and the naval program appears to have had little or no trouble securing the popular vote.

*The Construction of One Hundred Triremes*

Accordingly, the assembly voted to have 100 triremes built, along with the required dockyards to house them (Diod. 15. 79. 1). The logistics of such an enterprise are such that many scholars have concluded that the Thebans could not have actually built the fleet; however, the consensus is divided and many maintain that all 100 were built, manned and sent across the Aegean. Because this completely underpins the nature of any reconstruction of events, it is necessary to examine the issue in some detail in order to establish the extent of plausibility that the fleet was in fact constructed.

Though earlier scholars did not explicitly dispute the construction of the fleet, some noted that the expense was beyond the means of the Boeotian League to finance; in

\textsuperscript{866} See above, 105.
\textsuperscript{867} Grote (1872), 290-291. Fortina (1958), 79-80, also asserts the likelihood of Menecleidas’ opposition.
particular, Pomtow wondered where such money came from.\textsuperscript{868} A few decades later scepticism arose when Beloch argued that not more than 40 ships were built, otherwise the entire endeavour would surely have achieved more. While his figure is not based on any actual evidence, he believes that the building program had actually begun and Epameinondas merely took with him the first few that had been completed. Though he points out that there were insufficient funds to maintain the fleet after the first voyage, it appears his main query is with the time constraint from the announcement of the program to the fleet’s maiden voyage.\textsuperscript{869} Later, Fortina also supposed that Diodorus was exaggerating the numbers that were actually built.\textsuperscript{870} Thus the main issue with the construction of the fleet was the question of how the Thebans could possibly have paid for it.

A potential solution to this issue was presented by Carrata-Thomes who suggested that funding could have come from the Persians who, at this stage, were happy to see Athenian power curbed.\textsuperscript{871} While this possibility is indeed incapable of being conclusively proven, it is too far to claim that there is “not a shred of evidence” that connects Persia with the Theban naval program.\textsuperscript{872} There are, in fact, a number of contextual factors that may indicate Persian funding. It is first worth considering what might have motivated the Persians to help the Thebans in the first place. We know that, until the visit of Ariobarzanes’ agent, Philiscus, in 368, the Persians still considered the Spartans to be the most influential Greek state on the mainland. It must then have come as a great surprise to find that the political and military situation in Greece had been drastically altered over just a few years. Then, in 367, Artaxerxes held a Common Peace conference in Susa in which Pelopidas came out on top above all the other representatives. Despite the fact that some attendees refused to sign the treaty, it is clear that a treaty was signed and the Thebans were made guarantors of it on behalf of the king. This in itself places the Thebans in the same position that the Spartans

\textsuperscript{868} Pomtow (1870), 102. See also Stern (1884), 217.
\textsuperscript{869} Beloch (1922), 197 n. 4, 198.
\textsuperscript{870} Fortina (1958), 80 n. 22.
\textsuperscript{871} Carrata-Thomes (1952), 23, 30.
\textsuperscript{872} Stylianou (1998), 495. See also Schachter (2014), 326-327, and Van Wijk (2019), 86 n. 19, 87-93, 100-107, who, against Persian funding, suggests that the naval voyage was comprised mainly of rented ships, and that the purpose of the voyage was to obtain funding to construct the fleet. This is certainly possible, but it would not negate the possibility of a Persian subsidy and it is no more plausible than arguing that that the ships were built. In addition, as argued below, the affair with Laches, suggests that a large fleet was employed in 364, which would have been extremely costly to man and maintain, even if they were rented. Thus, large sums were required to initiate even a more modest expedition.
held after the Peace of Antalcidas, which gives them Persian permission to enforce the terms of the treaty, much like the Spartans did when threatening the Thebans with invasion if they failed to sign. It is worth noting that the treaty in Susa contained a clause demanding that Athens disband its fleet. Failure to do so therefore provides ample justification to threaten them with force. It is then logical, if the Thebans did not have the resources, for the king to provide what was required to achieve such a task, just as Persia provided money to Sparta during the Peloponnesian War for the same purpose and again in the late 390s for the Athenians (Xen. Hell. 4. 8. 6-12; Diod. 14. 84. 3-5). We must remember that the king desired Greek mercenaries to help against various revolts and with Athens still at war with Thebes and potentially supporting Ariobarzanes, this was his best option without getting his own hands dirty in the process. In addition to this Artaxerxes gave great gifts to all who attended the treaty (Xen. Hell. 7. 1. 38; Plut. Pel. 30. 6); it is possible that Pelopidas was awarded a hefty sum, enough at least to begin construction of the navy.

Whether or not one can accept Persian funding, perhaps the biggest point of contention has arisen out of the ambiguity of the language. Diodorus does not outright say that the ships were ever actually built; instead he indicates that the assembly voted to build them. While he does say that Epameinondas was sent out with a powerful force (μετά δυνάμεως), it has been presumed that, since the Thebans did not have the means to construct the fleet, they must already have had a modest amount of ships at hand. The Boeotians did have a small naval tradition and may indeed have had a cohort of ships at hand, making this supposition perfectly plausible. However, it is just as easy to make the opposite argument; hence, Buckler asserts conversely that Diodorus does not indicate a disbelief that all the ships were constructed. But since this failed to convince some scholars Buckler made two further attempts to prove that a considerable number of the ships must have been built. He

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873 On Persian funding for Sparta see Lazenby (2004), 254-255.
874 See below, 270-271.
875 Most proponents of Persian funding agree that it was acquired at or as a result of Pelopidas’ visit to Susa in 367. See Carrata-Thomas (1952), 23-24; Buckler (1980a), 155-156. Ruzicka (1998), 66 n. 23, does not think the fleet was built to any great extent but thinks Persian funding is plausible. Roisman (2017), 315, is open to a Persian subsidy but also notes that large sums of money may have been acquired in previous invasions of the Peloponnesus. He adds that wealthy citizens of Boeotia may also have contributed.
876 Cawkwell (1972), 271; Stylianou (1998), 452-453, 494-495. See also Sealey (1976), 433-434
877 Buckler (1980a), 308 n. 19. See also Sealey (1994), 291-292 n. 75.
makes the case from a linguistic perspective: Diodorus says that the assembly voted (ἐψηφίσατο) to build (ναυπηγεῖσθαι) the ships and dockyards. Buckler points out that the main verb is an aorist middle, which implies the decision was made. This is followed by a present infinitive, indicating a “continued or repeated action”, as opposed to an aorist infinitive, which does not. Thus, Diodorus is here indicating the construction of a fleet, which would indeed require continued action. This in itself does not necessarily prove anything concerning the Theban navy; however, it does seem to imply that Diodorus did in fact believe that the ships were constructed.

On the other hand, perhaps more poignantly, Buckler argues that, in order to pose any real threat to the Athenian navy, a large force was needed. Despite some claims to the contrary the Athenians were undoubtedly capable of mustering a fleet of a comparable size and, since Athenian culture had been entrenched in naval warfare for well over a century, a modest Boeotian force would pose little threat, as well as being in serious danger of being overwhelmed by an Athenian fleet of equal or larger size. It is hard to imagine that Epameinondas would seriously consider making a costly and potentially dangerous voyage across the Aegean, intending to undermine the authority of the Athenian thalassocracy, without a sufficient force for protection.

880 Buckler (2003), 340 n. 48.
881 The amount of ships Athens fielded during the first 20 years of the Second Confederacy varied greatly: 379/8: 100 in total (IG II2 1604); 376: 83 at the Battle of Naxos (Diod. 15. 34. 5); 375: 60 at the Battle of Alyzeia, then refitted by Timotheus to make 70 (Xen. Hell. 5. 4. 63-66); 373: Timotheus was given 60 ships but unable to man them before being replaced by Iphicrates who managed to man 70 (Xen. Hell. 6. 2. 9-14); Timotheus was again given 60 ships to aid Corcyra, added 30 himself and Athens commissioned 40 more, making 130 in total (Diod. 15. 47. 2-4); 368/7: Autocles took 30 ships to assist Alexander of Pherae (Diod. 15. 71. 3); 366: Timotheus had 30 ships to besiege Samos (Isoc. 15. 111); 357: Chares and Chabrias were given 60 ships for use against allied revolts before Chares was sent another 60, making a total of 120 (minus one if we consider Chabrias went down with his ship) (Diod. 16. 7. 3; 21. 1). Numbers for operations during the period in question are unfortunately lacking and while the 30 in 368/7 and 366 seem like the standard for that period (it appears to have been 60 in the 370s), it is clear from the case of 357 that the Athenians generally kept at least the same amount of ships in reserve, while probably capable of fielding more, though mercenary manpower may have been needed. A naval inventory of 357/6 says that there were 283 triremes in the Piraeus, though not all were seaworthy (IG II2 1611. 1-9). It is worth noting that, in 369, Procles of Phlius, while addressing the Athenian assembly, asserts (according to Xenophon) that Athens has many ships and, by tradition, continues to build them (Xen. Hell. 7. 1. 3). It is not unreasonable to suggest that Athens could have fielded 100 triremes in 364, if it needed to.
882 One need only give a cursory glance of Athenian fifth century history to confirm this statement; however, for an excellent study dedicated to Athenian naval culture, see Hale (2009).
The previous argument, however, is ultimately underpinned by how one interprets the actions of the Athenian fleet under Laches that retreated in the face of the Boeotian fleet. Diodorus indicates three significant points: one, Laches was sent out with the purpose of hindering (διακωλύειν) Epameinodas; two, he is said have had a considerable fleet (στόλον ἀξιόλογον); three, he was forced to retreat. While this clearly indicates the relative strength of the Boeotian fleet, Diodorus’ statements have been disputed. Cawkwell, against all three points, argued that, contrary to Diodorus, Laches did not attack Epameinondas since that would constitute a breach of the recent peace treaty of 366/5; thus Laches was not sent to διακωλύειν Epameinondas, nor did he require a large force. While this line of argument has not been challenged with much discussion, I have above demonstrated that the Athenians were by no means necessarily a party to the peace and would therefore have had no political reason to avoid battle with the Theban armada: Athens was still technically at war with Thebes.

Stylianou also argues that στόλον ἀξιόλογον tells us nothing since it was just Diodorus “making good his source’s silence on the matter”. He points out that ἀξιόλογος is used when Diodorus’ source does not provide numbers for military forces; thus concluding that Laches probably had a small fleet that was on guard duty at the Hellespont. However, against this assertion, Buckler showed that Diodorus only uses the phrase when he refers to a large military force. It is true that the phrase is frequently employed when figures are lacking; however, to assert that Diodorus uses it as a way of filling in the gaps of his source material is demonstrably false. There are, in fact, at least four occasions where the same phrase is used and Diodorus actually does provide figures for military units, all of them large (Diod. 12. 32. 1, 3; 54. 6; 61. 1-2; 16. 25. 1). It is therefore quite manifest that στόλον ἀξιόλογον refers to a considerable fleet. Given due consideration we must conclude that the arguments against Diodorus do not hold up to scrutiny and, in light of a growing body of evidence:

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883 Cawkwell (1972), 271. Also in favour of this argument are Ruzicka (1998), 61 n.8; Russell (2016), 186 n. 2; van Wijk (2019), 105.
884 Stylianou (1998), 496, and Mackil (2008), 182 n. 102, both find it implausible.
885 See above, 218-226.
886 Normally with δύναμιν but also with φρουράν and στόλον.
887 Stylianou (1998), 133, 496
888 Buckler (2008), 182-183.
evidence, as we shall see, the Theban naval project appears to have been much more extensive than has often been assumed.

The Boeotian Naval Tradition

Buckler compared the Boeotian naval project to that of Imperial Germany, before World War I, when it established itself as a naval power despite lack of experience. While the Boeotian League had never attempted anything to this scale before, they were not entirely without experience in such matters; indeed, the last couple of generations had seen some significant naval activity; both in construction and warfare. The evidence for this is minimal; however, enough survives for us to establish an overview for the role of the Boeotian navy in Greek history.

The earliest reference to a Boeotian navy is in Homer’s catalogue of ships going to Troy: he states that they sent 50 ships, each with 120 men on board (Hom. II. 2. 494-510; cf. Eur. IA. 253-255). This indicates the belief that Boeotia was able, at least in the past, to put together a significant fleet. There is also an eighth century Attic Geometric bowl depicting an oared ship with 60 rowers a side, which was found in Thebes. It has been suggested that it was commissioned by a Theban client. But, since no Boeotian ships were used during the Persian wars, it is apparent that any historical association with a naval tradition had long fallen into despondency by the early fifth century.

Later, in 413, just after the Sicilian expedition, the Spartans bid their allies to build triremes, which included a quota from the Boeotians amounting to 25 (Thuc. 8. 3. 2). While it is not certain whether all the ships were built there were at least 10 of them being prepared to sail to Lesbos early in 412 (Thuc. 8. 5. 2) and may have been part of the Peloponnesian fleet that was sent to Chios in the spring of the same year (Thuc. 8. 10. 2). The rapidity of this

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889 Buckler (2008), 180. Fortina (1958), 80, also iterates their lack of experience.
890 Morrison et al. (2000), 27, 30 fig. 23.
891 Kagan (2003), 331-332, thinks very few were built by Sparta’s mainland allies, but since there were a number of ships from various allies destroyed at Cynossema, their contributions must have been significant.
feat demonstrates that the Boeotians already had the facilities to construct the ships as well as the necessary contacts to obtain the imported materials. This fleet would then embark upon several military operations throughout 412 and 411. It is unclear how much the Boeotian ships were utilized throughout these events; however, they were certainly used. Although most of the ships that were sent to Chios were disabled (Thuc. 8. 10. 4), two Boeotian triremes were destroyed at the Battle of Cynossema, in 411 (Thuc. 8. 106. 3). This suggests that they participated throughout the campaign. It is also apparent that the Boeotian League maintained the means to produce triremes but had never spared the expense to produce more than a few; probably for the purpose of protecting their harbours. Thus, we can see that the precedent for building a fleet in Boeotia existed nearly 50 years before the naval project of the 360s.

There was a continuation of this trend in 377 when the Thebans, having had their land ravaged for two consecutive years, sent two triremes to Pagasae in order to obtain food for the populace (Xen. *Hell.* 5. 4. 56). We also later find, in 371, before the Battle of Leuctra, Cleombrotus and the Spartan army occupied the Boeotian port of Creusis and captured either 10 (Diod. 15. 53. 1) or 12 triremes that belonged to the Thebans (Xen. *Hell.* 6. 4. 3). The number of ships at Creusis was probably their largest conglomeration since they were only at war with the Spartans by this stage and Creusis was the most vulnerable Boeotian port on the Corinthian Gulf. The two ships sent to Pagasae may also be indicative of the number of triremes stationed at the eastern ports: perhaps four or five. From this evidence it is more than apparent that the Boeotians, while not in the habit of large-scale trireme production, continually maintained and constructed triremes throughout the 370s and probably into the 360s.

To add to this, we also find evidence that, in the 370s, the Boeotian League provided a fleet to serve in the navies of the second Athenian League. In the speech, *Against*
Timotheus, written around 362 for Apollodorus, who is, by modern scholars, credited to have composed it, the Athenian general Timotheus is being sued for having borrowed money from Apollodorus’ father, the banker, Pasion. During the accusation, Apollodorus claims that Timotheus had used some of the money to provide payment for the Boeotian fleet. He is quite clearly referring to the naval campaign of 374/3 when Timotheus was sent to attack Laconia; however, due to lack of crew and resources, he spent a protracted amount of time in the Cyclades attempting to remedy the situation. Because of this the Athenians removed him from his command and replaced him with Iphicrates. In the speech, several statements give us an indication for the organization of the Boeotian contribution to the Athenian fleet. There are a number of references to a Boeotian fleet: twice literally as the Boeotian triremes (τῶν Βοιωτίων τριήρων/αί Βοιώται τρυήρεις: [Dem] 49. 14, 50) and twice as Boeotian ships (τῷ Βοιωτίῳ... τῶν νεόν/τάς Βοιωτίας ναὸς: [Dem] 49. 15, 16). This implies that the Boeotians provided several ships for the operation: a number similar to what Cleombrotus confiscated at Creusis may well be an apt estimation.

Apollodorus also tells us that, at the head of this fleet, an unnamed admiral was in charge: this is referred to twice as the Boeotian leader (τῷ Βοιωτίῳ ἅρχοντι τῶν νεόν and τῷ... Βοιωτίῳ ἅρχοντι: [Dem] 49. 15, 49) and 11 times, more literally, as ὁ Βοιώτιος ναύαρχος ([Dem] 49. 21, 48, 49, 50, 51, 53, 54). We thus have a Boeotian official whose responsibility was clearly, in this case, to distribute payment amongst his ships’ crew. He must furthermore have been in charge of the fleet’s movements before and after joining the Athenians, where overall authority was given to the likes of Timotheus. Finally, we twice hear of Boeotian trierarchs (τοῖς Βοιωτίοις τριήραρχοι: [Dem] 49. 14, 48). We can therefore conclude that the Boeotian League, in the 370s, had the necessary personnel to both manufacture and operate several triremes in order to contribute to major naval actions conducted by the Athenians. It is, however, uncertain whether the rowers used were drafted Boeotian citizens or mercenaries. But, considering that, throughout this period, the Boeotian

896 On the date of the speech see Schäfer (1856-1858), 140-143. Though Harris (1988), 44-52, has made the case for the early 360s, most scholars argue in favour of the traditional dating, see Trevett (1991), 21-27; Trevett (1992), 35-36; Scafuro (2011), 359-361.
897 For Apollodorus as the author of Against Timotheus see Trevett (1992); Scafuro (2011), n. 6.
898 See above, 87.
army was almost constantly campaigning on land, it may have been difficult to fill the quota of a 173 rowers for each trireme.

In addition to this we have references to Theban triremes in an Athenian naval inventory, which has been dated to around 373/2 (IG II² 1607. 49-50, 152-158). In lines 49 to 50 it mentions a trireme, the name of which is lost, provided for the Thebans. The text states that it was not equipped (ἀνεπίσκευον), i.e. lacking in oars, sails, etc. Then, in lines 152 to 158, another trireme, named Aphrodisia, was to be equipped (ἐπισκευάσαι) by the Thebans, or perhaps at Thebes’ expense. Although the text says that the ships were used by Ἐθῆαίοι rather than Βοιώτιοι, this is because the Thebans had joined the Athenian League independently from the Boeotian League; thus899 officially they were Theban. But as we can see from Apollodorus’ speech, in practice, the Athenians recognized that the Theban contingent constituted a Boeotian fleet. From this text we can ascertain that, though lacking in ships, the Boeotians were quite capable of providing the necessary personnel to man triremes under their own steam.900

It is apparent that the Boeotian League had maintained and utilized their ability to possess a navy from at least the late fifth century to the present situation in 364. Though the attempt to build and man 100 triremes is vastly greater than any of their previous navies, it is clear that the precedent for it had long existed and had experienced a surge of activity in recent years. They were then liable to already have at hand much of the required workforce and trade connections necessary to complete the task with reasonable efficiency. It is therefore unsurprising that they believed that achieving supremacy at sea was a legitimate possibility.

899 For the nature of the Theban alliance with the Second Athenian League in the 370s see Cargill (1981), 56-60.
900 This is one of a few examples where the Athenians leased out triremes to allied states, see Jordan (1975), 90 n. 109.
Building Triremes: Logistics and Preparations

Whether or not all 100 triremes were ever actually built cannot ever be confirmed; however, based on the arguments above it seems probable that a large-scale ship-building program was, in fact, realized to some extent. The logistics for such an endeavour are extensive, particularly for the Boeotians who had never attempted anything remotely comparable. It is therefore worthwhile to consider the means by which they managed to achieve, at least to some extent, the construction of a considerable number of triremes. The following discussion will proceed under the assumption that all 100 were built, though it is worth noting that, if the figures were halved, it would still have been an ambitious task.

The triremes of the fifth and fourth centuries are often considered to be the height of the technology of the period. They were intricately designed for the sole purpose of ramming enemy ships and had been the dominant force in naval warfare since at least the Persian Wars. However, the decision to actually build a significant number was, by any respects, an incredibly mean feat. A single trireme required at least 15 tonnes of wood for the hull alone. This was usually made from either pine (πεύκη) or fir (ἐλάτη), the latter being preferable since it was lighter and therefore produced a faster vessel. The keel of the ship was normally made of oak. A further 10 tonnes were needed for the outriggers, thwarts, decks, stanchions and braces. At least 173 oars were needed per ship not including a significant number of spares: these were usually made from fir. In addition to this, masts and yards were needed, also made of fir. Thus, in wood alone, 100 ships would require approximately 2,500 tonnes, not to mention the wood for well over 17,000 oars, along with 100 masts and yards.

Other than timber, each trireme required copious amounts of stopping material, which may have been either flax or papyrus, along with pitch to soak it in and cover the hull.

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901 While the interpretation of a Greek trireme as a three-tiered ship has come into question in recent years, e.g. Tilley (2004), it is still the standard and will be utilized in this discussion. In general, see Morrison et al. (2000). Still useful, particularly for iconographic evidence, is Morrison and Williams (1968). Now also see Rankov (2012), for arguments both in favour and against the standard interpretation. See also Murray (2012).

902 Morrison et al. (2000), 179-181 (wood types), 188 (masts and sailyards), 111, 188-189 (oars), 210 (weight of trireme).
which was made from tar or something equivalent. Extensive lengths of rope were needed for use as halliards, brailing ropes and for the hypozomata. These were made from flax or papyrus. The same material was used for the sails, which, for each ship required about 90 square metres for the mainsail and a quarter of that for the foresail (c. 22.5 square metres). This makes something like 11,250 square metres of sail for 100 ships. As we can see, the amount of flax or papyrus needed was considerable. Each trireme would also be fitted with a bronze ram weighing some 200 kilograms, i.e. some 20 tonnes for 100 ships. Along with this, bronze was needed for nails and the metal rings that attach the sails to the sailyards and for the bronze fitting on the mast-heads. It is also possible that the ships would be equipped with iron anchors, which could weigh up to almost 600 kilograms each. Large quantities of leather were needed for the askomata903 and for the oar loops on the tholepins, which would need to be replaced frequently. It is clear from this brief assessment that it would have taken a considerable amount of organizing to procure all of these materials, particularly since much of it would have to be imported.904

The question of where the Boeotians obtained all the necessary materials must remain largely speculative; however, a few suppositions can be made based on the available evidence. While sails and rope could have been produced within Boeotia itself, most of mainland Greece was not known for its flax cultivation; thus, would therefore have needed to acquire the raw flax from overseas. It is also possible that the materials were purchased having already been processed into rope or linen. For the Classical period the main sources of flax were from the Black Sea area (particularly Colchis) and Egypt. There is also some indication that a type of flax and linen was produced in the Cycladic island of Amorgos. Xenophon indicates that Phasian (from Colchis) and Carthaginian flax were the best (Xen. Hunt. 2. 4). We also find, in a fragment of Hermippus, that Carthage manufactured textiles, carpets and embroidered pillows (Hermippus fr. 63 = Athen. 1. 49) and Pollux later attested the prominence of Carthaginian linen, which, he says, was of a high quality, along with the linen from Sardinia (Poll. 5. 26). It is clear that the flax and linen trade in Carthage was prominent and enduring. Though the Boeotians could have imported flax or linen from any

903 These were leather sleeves that were fitted to every Thalamian (lower level) oarport.
904 Morrison, et al. (2000), 184-188 (stopping and pitch), 189-190, 223-236 (ropes), 223-224 (sails), 221-223 (rams), 224 (metal rings and bronze fitting), 216 (askomata),
one of these sources, there may be reason to consider Carthage as a probable candidate. There is an inscription for a Carthaginian proxenos, named Nobas, in Boeotia, which has been dated to either 366 or 365 (IG VII 2407). Glotz suggested, based on the historical context, that Nobas was a naval technician employed to help with the design of the triremes; however, because Boeotia already had experience, albeit small scale, in naval construction, it has since been argued that such a technician would not have been required. Despite this, in light of the increasing array of proxeny decrees from the period, more recent scholars tend to accept that the Carthaginian proxenos was likely to have had something to do with the naval project, particularly since both Carthage and Boeotia had mutual interests against Dionysius II of Sicily. However, because Nobas was probably not a naval technician, a plausible alternative in fact may be that he was responsible for providing the Boeotians with the necessary materials for the rope and sails of their ships.

To acquire the necessary bronze, it appears to have been most common to trade copper and tin separately. The ores of both would be smelted into ingots and transported to their destination where they were alloyed together to make bronze. The most obvious place for Boeotia to obtain copper was from Chalcis in Euboea from the Lelantine plain. Other candidates include Delos, Seriphos, Argolis, Sicyon and also Macedonia, which, as we shall see, was the most likely source of timber. The ultimate source of tin is less certain: it has been argued that tin, for Athens, may have come from as far as Gaul and Britain. Perhaps more significant, in this case, is the likelihood that it was transported and traded by Carthaginian merchants. We thus find another plausible reason for Nobas’ proxeny. If anchors were built the iron for this could be found in Boeotia itself, though this may have been supplemented with imports, which could be found in Euboea, Thasos, Laconia (not in this case), Chalcidice and, again, Macedonia. Considering the existence of the iron

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905 See Koehler (1889), 636-640; Beloch (1922), 126 n. 2; Glotz (1933), 331-335, though Cawkwell (1972), 272 n. 1, thinks that the early 350s is possible.
906 Glotz (1933), 335-339. See also Carrata-Thomes (1952), 25-26; Roesch (1965), 75-76; Fossey (1994), 35. Cary (1926), 190-191, proposed the interesting idea that Nobas entertained Theban guests in Carthage who helped to create the Carthaginian Sacred Band; however, the Boeotian proxeny decrees from this period are all generally associated with the naval project.
907 Cawkwell (1972), 272 n. 1; Buckler (1980a), 308 n. 27; Stylianou (1998), 495.
909 Healy (1978), 57-58.
910 Treister (1996), 258-259.
911 Healy (1978), 62; Bakhuizen (1979), 19-20; Bresson (2016), 353.
deposits and Boeotia’s previous experience in building triremes, it is probable that they had the necessary personnel to work all the metals in Boeotia itself.

The timber would also need to be imported since the only local sources were small deposits on Mt. Cithaeron and Mt. Helicon. The largest major supplies in the vicinity could be found at Euboea, Amphipolis and Macedonia. Amphipolis was far too dangerous to obtain wood from because of its importance to Athens. Euboea may have been a viable option because of its close proximity and alliance with Boeotia; however, Euboea was known to have had poor quality trees (Theoph. Hist. Pl. 5. 2. 1) and had no tradition of trading timber in such a large scale unlike Macedonia, which undoubtedly had all the necessary lumber crews and transports for delivering the wood. Contextually Macedonia is the best choice for timber, which is the conclusion that scholars have generally arrived at. Since then, another proxeny decree was discovered when a brick from the church at the modern town of Lefktra (the site of the Battle of Leuctra) was dislodged in February 1981 during an earthquake. The proxeny was for a Macedonian named Athenaeus, son of Demonicus and may be dated to around 365, though possibly somewhat earlier (SEG 34:355[1]). We also later find one Demonicus, son of Athenaeus, serving as a trierarch in the navy of Alexander the Great (Arr. Ind. 18. 3). It has thus been suggested that we have evidence here for a Macedonian seafaring family. Lane Fox has added that Athenaeus’ name may indicate that his father had dealings with Athens during the last years of the Peloponnesian War (c. 407-406). It therefore seems highly plausible that Athenaeus was awarded the proxeny as a reward for shipping all of the wood to Boeotia.

In Euripides’ Iphigenia in Aulis it is stated that the 50 ships that Thebes sent to Troy were decorated on the prow with representations of Cadmus grasping a golden dragon (Eur. IA. 253-258). It is possible that this was practiced by the Theban navy in Euripides’ day,

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912 Fortina (1958), 80-81; Buckler (1980a), 163.
913 Roesch (1984), 45-60.
914 Lane Fox (2011), 263.
around the time the play was written, between 408 and 406.\footnote{Günther (1988), 1.} We can imagine that, in 364, the newly constructed triremes were adorned with some similar such patriotic imagery.

\textit{Boeotian Naval bases and Shipsheds}

Another facet of the naval expedition is the question of where the triremes were harboured. While there were several docks on the coasts of both northeast and southwest Boeotia, Diodorus specifically indicates that new facilities were to be built in order to house the unprecedented number of triremes. The term νεώρια, though generally used to mean simply ‘docks’, is here synonymous with νεώσοικος, referring more specifically to shipsheds.\footnote{Fortina (1958), 82 n. 36; Blackman (1968), 181 n. *; Buckler (2008), 185. See Blackman (2013), 16-17, for its use in general.} Since Boeotia was clearly in possession of a small number of triremes it is probable that a few small-scale shipsheds already existed; however, for 100 ships, this new construction would be monumental by comparison. Unfortunately, no definitive remains of shipsheds have been found in any of the Boeotian ports, which has led to disagreement over the most plausible site of the naval base. Without further evidence it is impossible to come to a completely reliable conclusion; it is then worth assessing all possibilities for their advantages and disadvantages.

The construction of shipsheds constituted another major expenditure for the Boeotians, which again may have been funded with Persian money. Without any remains of shipsheds we can only speculate on the structure (or structures) that was actually built. If we were to assume that the minimum criterion for \textit{neoria} was employed, i.e. uncovered slipways made mostly of timber, it would require approximately 8,800 ‘man-days’, including construction and transport of about 175 tonnes of wood. If roofed slipways were built, the inclusion of stone foundations, columns, clay roof tiling and various other logistical additions would increase the expense exponentially: nearly 40,000 ‘man-days’ for only 10 slip-ways.\footnote{Pakkanen (2013), 55-75, provides carefully calculated estimates for the three phases of shipsheds at Zea in the Piraeus. While the expense for the Boeotians was undoubtedly substantially different, Pakkanen’s figures serve as a useful guide.} If stone was used it could have come from Asine in the Argolid, Naone in Macedonia, Sicyon...
(though this quarry is thought to have not been used till the third century) or possibly even from Cenchreae in Corinth, which had recently concluded a peace treaty with Thebes. The timber, just as for the triremes, probably came from Macedonia. Since no remains of shipsheds have been found it may be that the structures in question were made only of wood, which could potentially have had wooden roofing as well.

Deciding where was the most practical and strategic place to construct the naval base must have taken a considerable amount of planning and discussion amongst Epameinondas and his associates. Though they had some experience in naval matters, it is quite possible that wiser counsel was sought from foreign benefactors; indeed, this may fit the context of the Spartan proxenos, Timeas, whom Mackil has argued could have in some way been involved in the naval project. During this planning several factors had to be considered before an appropriate site could be chosen. Three major criteria were needed for a good war harbour: first, the site would need to have ample space for docking the triremes, i.e. in this case, space for the large number of shipsheds. Second, the waters in the harbour would need to be relatively calm since triremes were not good seafaring ships. Finally, it would need to have good communications with the interior of Boeotia, particularly with that of Thebes, in order to respond quickly in the event of a naval attack. A fragment of Ephorus states that Boeotia is well situated for supremacy at sea since it is connected to three seas and has a number of good harbours (Ephorus FGrH 70 F119 = Strabo 9. 2. 2). Ephorus is here referring to Boeotia’s excellent potential for maritime trade throughout the Mediterranean; however, a number of factors, such as inaccessibility and rough weather, unbeknownst to Ephorus meant that Boeotia was probably never a major centre for maritime trade let alone a naval power. In spite of this, all Boeotian ports were liable to have been used for trade and at least some were already used as minor military bases. As follows, each port will be considered.

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921 Buckler (2008), 189-198.
922 See Gomme (1911/12), 189-210, against the theories of Béard (1902/3). On the context of the Ephoran fragment see Parker BNJ 70 F119.
On the southwest coast of Boeotia there were a total of four ports available: Chorsiae, Thisbae, Siphae and Creusis (Map 1). The westernmost of these was Chorsiae, which was an ancient settlement about 5.7 kilometres to the south of the peak of Mt. Helicon, Palaiovóuno (1748m). Situated on a small spur near the foot of the mountain, known now as Kástro, are the remains of a fortified settlement. Around two kilometres south of here lies Saranda Bay, which is flanked by a small peninsula to the west and the Malia Senga Ridge to the east. Although no evidence of an ancient port has been discovered, some remains of an extensive fortification have been found on the western peninsula, though these have yet to be dated. The bay itself is naturally ideal for beaching ships and, if the western fortifications could be dated to the period in question, it would be unsurprising if the bay was able to house a few triremes, even if only as a way station. It should further be noted that the settlement of Chorsiae itself was fortified in an extensive enceinte of coursed-ashlar masonry, which encircles the acropolis and the lower town and has been dated to the period after the Battle of Leuctra. However, the primary downfall for Chorsiae as a major naval base was the fact that it is completely enclosed from inland by mountains that would make access and communications with Thebes very limited.

Moving eastward across the Malia Senga ridge we find the extensive bays of the Domvrena Gulf, which contained the ports of Thisbae and Siphae. The fortified ancient polis of Thisbae is on a small but steep hill directly to the northwest of the modern village Thisvi, which is at the northern end of the Domvrena plain that continues southward for just over two kilometres before lightly ascending into a low mountain range made up of the three peaks (running west to east) Mavrovouni (c. 320m), Khimadhio (269m) and Kokkithari (291m). Between the first two of these there is a low pass that allows for easy access to two little inlets on the north side of the gulf. The easternmost of these, just south of Khimadhio, is the site of the church Agios Ioannis and a marina that holds a couple dozen small vessels. While it is accessible through an easy route along the western side of the mountain, it is far too small and narrow for any number of military vessels, lacks drinking water and is

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923 On the territory of Chorsiae see Fossey (1988), 186-196, for overview and bibliography.
924 Gomme (1911/13), 204-205; Heurtley (1923/25), 42; Buckler (1980a), 162; Farinetti (2011), 167, 171.
925 On the fortifications see Maier (1958), 17-25.
926 Farinetti (2011), 168.
exposed to serious southerly gales. Further to the west, just south of Mavrovouni, is the much larger inlet, Vathy. The beach here is large, sandy and would be good for beaching triremes; however, its access point, along the south side of the mountain, is steep and much more difficult. There is no definitive evidence which of these inlets served as the port of Thisbae,\(^{927}\) but due to its capacity and the presence of some remains (albeit minor) Vathy may be the preferred choice; though because of its accessibility, Heurtley argued in favour of Agios Ioannis.\(^{928}\) On the other hand, the whole western section of Domvrena may have served as an anchorage, which is apparently confirmed by an inscription from 170 (\textit{IG} VII 2225).\(^{929}\) But even if this is the case, such an occurrence is not conducive to a military port, which required ample docking space for triremes. While the harbours are clearly not ideal, it should be noted that the journey from the city of Thisbae itself to Thebes was an easy one.\(^{930}\)

At the eastern end of Domvrena is the Bay of Alyki where the remains of the fortified polis of Siphae can be found. At the eastern and largest section of the bay lies a sandy beach that continues for about 950 metres, which is broken some 220 metres from the southern most point by a small but steep rocky hill where the acropolis was situated. To the east the bay is separated from Creusis by the heights of Korombili (907m) and to the south the bay is enclosed (and for that matter all of Domvrena) by the smaller ridge of Tapsila (234m).\(^{931}\) The acropolis and the lower town were fortified in a well-constructed wall of ashlar masonry, which includes the impressive remains of a watchtower. These have been dated to the fourth century.\(^{932}\) The wall runs westward all the way to the waterline and from here clearly enclosed off the settlement from the north. At this point, moving southward, there are remains of what appear to be ancient slipways or perhaps even shipsheds.\(^{933}\) Baika is sceptical of them being shipsheds though she does agree that some of Epameinondas’ shipbuilding program may have been carried out at this port.\(^{934}\) The remains are very clear for about 60 metres and from there appear only a couple of sparse fragments; however, they

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\(^{927}\) We certainly know that a port of Thisbae existed (Strabo 9. 2. 28).

\(^{928}\) Heurtley (1923/25), 42-43.

\(^{929}\) Heurtley (1923/25), 41; Fossey (1988), 182-183. On the territory of Thisbae see Fossey (1988), 176-185, for overview and bibliography.

\(^{930}\) Gomme (1911/13), 204; Heurtley (1923/25), 41.

\(^{931}\) On the territory of Siphae see Fossey (1988), 167-175, for overview and bibliography.

\(^{932}\) On the fortifications of Siphae see, in particular, Schwandner (1977), 513-551.

\(^{933}\) Cooper (2000), 175, 180; Simossi (2009), 114-115

\(^{934}\) Baika (2013b), 582.
indicate, as Schwandner established, that the slips ran practically the full extent of the enclosed beach, some 120 metres (Schwandner’s measurement). Though Schwandner suggests that they are Roman or Byzantine due to the presence of concrete, a conclusive date for their construction has yet to be established.935

If these remains can be considered shipsheds then it is apparent that they could have accommodated about 20 triremes maximum. In addition to this, nearly 90 metres north of the wall there appears to be a few bricks that bear resemblance to the alleged shipsheds, which may indicate a much larger docking capability. It is more than clear that Siphae was an impressive and important port city, which undoubtedly had significant military capabilities. Regardless of whether one can accept the presence of shipsheds the long sandy beach would have been ideal for triremes and could well have housed a large number of them. On the other hand, once again, communication with Thebes would have been difficult936 and has led Buckler in particular to conclude that it could not have been the main naval base for the new armada.937

East from Siphae, over Korombili we find the wide Bay of Livadostro where the ancient port of Creusis lay. The bay is situated on a plain located between the ridges of Korombili and the westernmost ridges of Cithaeron, which are separated at the mouth of the bay by nearly 550 metres. At the western end of the bay, on a diamond shaped hill at the foot of Korombili lie the remains of a fortified city. The walls are made in essentially the same ashlar masonry as found at Siphae and the western section similarly runs from the shore northward up the hill to a small plateau where the acropolis was situated. From there the wall ran in a northeasterly direction down to the foot of the hill. The eastern portion of the wall has now been almost completely destroyed due to the construction of a modern road but had previously been observed by Roesch.938 While there are no apparent remains of the ancient dockyard, Pausanias tells us that it served as the port of Thespiae (Paus. 9. 32. 1) and, as noted earlier, it housed either 10 or 12 triremes in 371, which implies the existence of slipways or even shipsheds. Heurtley tells us that the old peasants said that the harbour was

935 Schwandner (1977), 521; Baika (2013b), 582.
937 Buckler (1980a), 162; Buckler (2008), 186.
938 Roesch (1965), 218. See also Fossey (1988), 157-163.
used by Turks travelling between Eremokastro (Thespiae) and Livadostro since a useful road existed, which may explain why it was the preferred port for Thebes in Frankish times. However, he also points out that the harbour itself is not ideal and is subject to sudden gales from Mt. Geraneia (1,350m) to the southeast, on the Isthmus, which sweep across the water with “extraordinary suddenness”. In addition to this, as in the other southern bays, the area is surrounded by mountains, which means, as Gomme asserts, that the way is short, but difficult. Though this implies that communication was not necessarily liable to be too problematical, transport of supplies and large units of military personnel would have been.

Overall the southern ports of Boeotia have a number of strong points for military harbours: they generally have ample space for beaching triremes and for the most part are easily accessible by sea. In particular it is interesting to note that, with the exception of Thisbae, all of the ports appear to have been fortified with the same style of masonry, i.e. from the period following the Battle of Leuctra in 371. It is clear that these ports were strengthened as part of a major fortification program during the period in an attempt to prevent any further Spartan invasions from the south. Naturally it would have been apposite to fortify the site of any major naval bases that were built; however, it may be too far to assert that these enceintes were constructed in conjunction with the naval program. Each of the southern points has poor communication with Thebes and the possible presence of slipways or shipsheds at Siphae is not evidence for involvement in the naval program since there is evidence that these ports could already house small naval arsenals. Furthermore, the only naval operation that we have evidence for occurred (as far as the evidence indicates) solely in the Aegean and it is apparent that the reason for the navy’s construction was to combat Athens, whose primary concern was in the Aegean. Our ultimate conclusion of this must be that the principal base for the Boeotian naval program was almost certainly on the coast of northwest Boeotia.

On the northwest coast there are at least six potential harbours: Halae, Larymna, Skroponeri, Anthedon, Aulis and Oropus (Map 2). The northernmost of these and most

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939 Heurtley (1923/25), 39. Also referred to by Gomme (1911/13), 206.
940 Gomme (1911/13), 204.
941 For the full discussion see Cooper (2000), 155-191.
remote is Halae, which is located in Opuntian Locris on the easternmost section of the Opuntian Gulf, now known as the Bay of Atalante. The remains of the old acropolis can be found in the modern town of Theologos at the northern end of the Theologos beach, just a few metres away from the waterline. Much of the area has now been encroached upon by modern buildings but the acropolis itself is still exposed. The enceinte was built in a similar style to other fortifications in the area (Larymna in particular) and has been dated to as early as the time of Epameinondas, though closer to the 350s may be preferable.\footnote{942} While the site is traditionally part of Opuntian Locris, in the fourth century it joined the Boeotian League and was therefore potentially utilized by the latter as a naval base.\footnote{943} Along the beach, directly to the west of the main part of the acropolis lie substantial remains of what have been interpreted as shipsheds.\footnote{944} Moving south along the beach, sparse fragments of these remains continue for the entire length of the acropolis. However, this conclusion has been disputed\footnote{945} and more recent assessment has determined these to be the remains of an outer wall, also dated to as early as the fourth century, though plausibly during Hellenistic times.\footnote{946} In spite of this the beach itself is very wide and could have housed a substantial number of triremes, though it is fairly rocky so slipways would have needed to be constructed. Some scholars have suggested the site as a possible base for the Boeotian navy,\footnote{947} but Buckler has argued against this since it is far too remote from Thebes.\footnote{948}

Heading southeast along the Euripus Strait we come to Larymna, which was an ancient port town located in the Bay of Larmes. At its widest and eastern end the bay is a little over 2.1 kilometres wide but moving westward it tapers out, over the course of some 2.5 kilometres, to an average of about 600 metres. At the western end there are three inlets: the southern being by far the largest, extending to the southwest some 700 metres and ending at the mouth of the Cephisus River; the northern two inlets are much smaller. The middle inlet is about 200 metres wide at its widest, which narrows into a beach about 60 metres wide. The northern inlet is 100 metres wide with a rocky beach of over 70 metres. Between the southern

\footnote{942} See below, 249-250.\footnote{943} For the site of Halae in general see Goldman (1940), 381-514; Fossey (1990a), 36-43; Coleman et al. (1992), 265-289.\footnote{944} Goldman (1940), 397.\footnote{945} Blackman (1968), 186 n. ‡; Baika (2013a), 579.\footnote{946} Coleman et al. (1992), 268.\footnote{947} Stern (1884), 218; Fortina (1958), 81 n. 22; Schläger et al. (1968), 90.\footnote{948} Buckler (2008), 186.
and middle inlets is a small peninsula where we find the extensive remains of the enceinte of what was clearly a fortified port city. The walls are of ashlar masonry; built, using a reddish limestone. Like Halae, the walls at Larymna have previously been dated to the time of Epameinondas and have even been associated with the naval program. Indeed, many scholars have considered it an excellent candidate for the main Boeotian naval base. This assertion is based, in part, on Pausanias who says that Larymna voluntarily became a Boeotian city in the time of Thebes’ ascendency (Paus. 9. 23. 7). While this could not mean any other time than the time of Epameinondas, the passage has been disputed since a much more contemporary source (c. 350), Pseudo Scylax, describes the city as part of Locris ([Scylax] Periplus 60). However, the nature of Boeotian influence in the area is more complicated than that, especially since Larymna would continue to change hands throughout history and we can confirm that Opuntian Locris was allied to the Boeotian League by 370 (Xen. Hell. 6. 5. 23). It is therefore not possible to come to a definitive conclusion on the matter; on the other hand, the topography may offer some indication. While there are no remains of ancient shipsheds the lower inlet could have housed a considerable number of ships, whereas, at the middle inlet, only a handful. Gomme noted that there was ample drinking water and that the path to Orchomenus is an easy one, whereas, the path to Thebes is difficult. Buckler too points out that because of the surrounding mountains communications with the interior are impeded. He also adds that the area is subject to high winds and storms, which could have been a serious danger for large numbers of triremes. While Buckler thinks the fortifications may indeed belong to the time of Epameinondas and the harbour may well have served as a secondary base, he argues that it was insufficient as the primary naval base.

Heading some seven kilometres southeast (as the crow flies) we come to the largest harbour in northern Boeotia, Skroponeri. At the entrance is the small island of Gatza (Vlomousa in Fossey). From there the bay stretches some 5.3 kilometres inland in a westward

949 See Fossey (1990a), 22-26, for the site in general and bibliography.
950 Oldfather (1916), 51-52.
951 Stern (1884), 218; Meyer (1913), 461; Cary (1933), 105; Fortina (1958), 81 n. 32; Schläger et al. (1968), 90.
953 See Oldfather (1916), 32-61, for an overview of Larymna's history.
954 Gomme (1911/13), 198, 200-201.
Near the mouth it is just over a kilometre at its narrowest point and, further in, expands to about 2.3 kilometres at its widest. The entire bay is surrounded by steep mountains, particularly the heights of Mt. Ptoion to the south. On the southern bay a small peninsula spurs out northward about 400 metres at a maximum width of nearly 150 metres. Here the remains of a small settlement have been found. At the southwest end of the bay on a small hill called Kastro are the remains of a fortified acropolis with walls of a rather indistinct style. Because of this, and the scarcity of ceramic sherds, a dating has not been established with certainty. Between the two settlements is an inlet with considerable beaching space: at Kastro, over 600 metres of beach and a similar size at the peninsula. Because of its isolation the bay is well protected from strong winds and the water is nearly devoid of a current, as well as being quite deep, making it an ideal place for mooring. There is also an abundance of fresh water from multiple sources.\footnote{956} A series of fortifications have been discovered on the mountains that surround the area that would have prevented anyone from entering Skroponeri by land or sea without being sighted from a distance. These constructions, though less well built than the fortifications on the south coast, have all been dated to the fourth century.\footnote{957} It has been argued by Fossey that these forts were built in conjunction with the Boeotian navy, which may have been housed at Skroponeri. Indeed, due to the many practicalities discussed, this bay was undoubtedly one of the more appropriate candidates. However, in spite of its potentially excellent docking capabilities, the site has long been known for the probability that it never had a large settlement and there is no evidence that a significant seaport ever existed there, let alone a fortified seaport with extensive slipways and shipsheds to boot.\footnote{958} Fossey rightly points out that the slips could have been built of wood but,\footnote{959} without evidence of a port, his overall conclusion may be somewhat unfounded. We must also add, of course, that the communications with the interior are not good; in fact, the area was virtually isolated until the main road was built in 1965.\footnote{960}

\footnote{956}{For the topography of Skroponeri in general see Fossey (1988), 262-264; Fossey (1990b), 192-200; Buckler (2008), 187-189; Farinetti (2011), 201-206.}
\footnote{957}{For the fortifications see Fossey (1990b), 194-199; Fossey (1992), 109-132.}
\footnote{958}{Gomme (1911/13), 198; Oldfather (1916), 34; Buckler (2008), 187-189.}
\footnote{959}{Fossey (1990b), 193.}
\footnote{960}{Fossey (1988), 7.}
There are, however, some traces of an ancient road from Skroponeri that headed eastward to the open and more exposed bay of ancient Anthedon.\textsuperscript{961} The ruins can be found about two kilometres north of modern Loukissia, in the municipal unit of Magdilo, at the foot of Mt. Ktypas (or Messapius). Here, in a small inlet are the remains of a port for the polis of Anthedon, the acropolis of which stood on the coastal hill immediately to the southeast. There are substantial remains at the port of two moles both about 120 metres long: the northernmost one running from west to east and the other, southeast along the bay, running south to north. It is apparent that the moles were fortified and the entrance to the port was narrow and could have been closed off by a chain. The extant remains have been dated to a late Roman or early Byzantine period, i.e. between the fourth to seventh century A.D.\textsuperscript{962} A number of scholars have associated the site with Epameinondas’ naval program,\textsuperscript{963} though no remains from the fourth century have been discovered. While the area is surrounded by mountains scholars have been rather contradictory over the site’s accessibility: Buckler says that the communications with the interior are bad and Fossey described the coastal plain as difficult to access.\textsuperscript{964} However, Gomme had earlier stated that the path to Thebes is not difficult and Buckler more recently changed his opinion by commenting on the site’s good accessibility.\textsuperscript{965} My own observations would incline towards the latter two statements since the main road to Thebes goes south from Loukissia along the eastern edge of Ktypas, along the side of a valley (with the low ridge of Mt. Rachi on the western side), which does not appear too difficult to navigate.\textsuperscript{966} Overall it is agreed that, as a naval base, Anthedon is far too small.\textsuperscript{967} There is no evidence for the remains of slipways or shipsheds; but even if they were built only a handful of triremes could have fit into the small inlet,\textsuperscript{968} unless some were built without. In addition, Fossey points out that the port is exposed to attack along with strong winds and currents.\textsuperscript{969} Despite this, the moles would have protected any ships from the

\textsuperscript{961} Fossey (1988), 251.
\textsuperscript{962} For the site of Anthedon see Schläger et al. (1968), 21-98, for the most detailed study and bibliography. See Fossey (1988), 251-257, for more recent work. Now also see Farinetti (2011), 201-206.
\textsuperscript{963} Lehmann-Hartleben (1923), 77-8; Philippson (1951), 495-497; Fortina (1958), 81 n. 32.
\textsuperscript{964} Buckler (1980a), 161, 309 n. 29; Fossey (1988), 251.
\textsuperscript{965} Gomme (1911/13), 200; Buckler (2008), 187.
\textsuperscript{966} This path appears to be referred to in Pausanias in conjunction with Mt. Messapius and may have been the main route between Anthedon and Thebes (Paus. 9. 22. 5, 26. 2).
\textsuperscript{967} Buckler (1980a), 161; Fossey (1990b), 191; Buckler (2008), 187.
\textsuperscript{968} Schläger et al. (1968), 90.
\textsuperscript{969} Fossey (1990b), 191.
currents, along with attacks from small forces; therefore, the port would have made an excellent outpost regardless of its involvement in the naval program.

Further southeast we enter the lower section of the Euripus, in the waters just south of Chalcis and the narrow straits southeast of Vourko Bay we find two smaller bays: the northerly and smaller one called Mikro Vathy and the southern and larger one called Megalo Vathy. Between these is the rocky hill of Vesalas where the remains of the fortified acropolis of Aulis can be found. To the west a valley is formed between Vesalas and the slopes of Megalo Vouno, though it opens at the southern end in a basin called Skhoinousa. At the foot of Vesalas on the northwestern side are the remains of a temple of Artemis amongst other buildings.\textsuperscript{970} The port of Aulis was famous in antiquity as the rendezvous site for the ships that were destined for Troy (Hom. \textit{Il.} 2. 303) and, in 396, was a point of contention when Agesilaus attempted to sacrifice there in imitation of Agamemnon but was driven out by the Thebans.\textsuperscript{971} Before the construction of a large factory the Mikro Vathy had a beach of some 200 metres in length and the Megalo Vathy has a stretch of over 600 metres. The Megalo Vathy alone had the space to house the entire fleet of 100 triremes.\textsuperscript{972} Indeed, it is worth mentioning that a more recent study has shown that, during the period from 1050 B.C. – 500 A.D. something of a lagoon was attached to the southern end of Mikro Vathy that stretched nearly all the way to the site of the agora.\textsuperscript{973} While it was not likely to be very deep during this period, the water displacement of triremes was not great and the lagoon could have been used as further docking space. The site affords protection from strong winds and offers good communications with the interior being the closest harbour to Thebes along natural land routes.\textsuperscript{974} It is worth noting that in 312 Antigonus’ admiral Ptolemy was able to dock 150 ships at Aulis (Diod. 19. 77. 4) and in 306 Demetrius would also land a sizeable force (Diod. 20. 100 5-6). This in itself ought to indicate the port’s suitability. The only particular reservations against the site are given by Fossey who argues that a more northern port is preferable since it offered safer access into the Aegean and because Aulis was in danger of

\textsuperscript{970} For the site of Aulis see Fossey (1988), 68-74, for overview and bibliography. See also Ghilardi et al. (2013), 2071-2083.

\textsuperscript{971} Xen. \textit{Hell.} 3. 4. 3-4; Plut. \textit{Lys.} 27. 1; \textit{Ages.} 15. 2-6.

\textsuperscript{972} Buckler (2008), 189.

\textsuperscript{973} Ghilardi et al. (2013), 2078-2080. Cf. Wallace (1979), 31, who noted that water was still present south of the bay in the early twentieth century.

\textsuperscript{974} Buckler (1980a), 164-165; Buckler (2003), 360; Buckler (2008), 189; Ghilardi et al. (2013). Gomme (1911/13), 199-200, says the route is good but thinks the way from Oropus is better.
attack from the Athenian fort of Rhamnus. However, Buckler has argued that the fort was predominantly used only for defence and, since Epameinondas’ fleet would indeed be attacked by an Athenian fleet, it is plausible that they sailed out through the south of the strait.

The final candidate for the base of the Boeotian navy is, further southeast along the Euripus from Aulis, the port of Oropus. Situated on the north coast of modern Attike, directly to the south of Eretria, is a sizeable semicircular harbour. At the centre and southernmost section of this lies the modern village of Skala Oropou. To the very southwest of this is a steep hill where some remains of the ancient acropolis have been found. Unfortunately no such remains of the ancient port still stand, though the remnants of an ancient breakwater were present as recently as the late nineteenth century. The eastern half of the beach is wide with small pebbles, easily providing nearly two kilometres appropriate for triremes, though the western section could be fitted as such without much difficulty. It is known that the port could house at least 42 triremes as recently as 411 (Thuc. 8. 94-95). Communications with Thebes are excellent, but scholars have tended to discard it as a possibility for the naval project because of its exposed position and proximity to Attica and the Athenian fort of Rhamnus. However, this point is inconsistent with Buckler’s previous statement that the fort was only used for defence. It is also possible that the ancient breakwater was fortified with defensive walls and the port may have been close-able, which may be indicated by the recent annexation of the city by Thebes. This would make the port far more sheltered from the elements and defensible than is initially obvious on first inspection of the site.

In the end, without any definitive textual or archaeological evidence conclusions on this matter must inevitably be tentative. Neither Fossey nor Buckler can safely argue for their preferred suggestions without admitting some fallibility. Having considered all available evidence it is apparent that it can be claimed that each Boeotian port had various advantages and disadvantages and, in some ways, each one is a possible candidate. However, we may, in
fact, be mistaken in attempting to determine where the ‘main’ base for the Boeotian navy was situated; rather, an option that ought to be considered is that several were important. First, it must be noted that, in the year before the navy was launched (365), Oropus had been captured by the Boeotians. As I have argued above, this affair also implies an alliance with Eretria, across the strait. It is manifest that control of these two ports was vital to protect the southern entrance to the strait. It would only be prudent, from then on, for the Boeotians to continue to house a few triremes in either port. This would be particularly crucial if Aulis was to have many new neoria built there. Second, while the northern access to the Euripus had been freed up to some extent due to the temporary quelling of Alexander of Pherae and the alliance with Macedon, Athenian interest had been predominantly focused on the northwestern Aegean, making it a serious possibility that the Boeotians could run into an Athenian fleet en route. Because of this it is not certain that Epameinondas did not lead the fleet into the Aegean via the southern exit of the Euripus. It is clear that defence of the Euripus must have been of the utmost concern for Thebes and it would therefore be unsurprising and militarily apt for several of the ports in the area to have been strengthened with additional triremes and shipsheds, along with fortifications.

The Aegean Theatre of War 366-364 B.C.

By 364 the fleet was ready for its first (and only) campaign with Epameinondas as its admiral. The situation in the Aegean at this stage was by no means secure for any side. Following or contemporary with the Peace of 366/5 the Athenians sent Timotheus eastward at the helm of a force of 30 triremes and 8,000 peltasts981 (Isoc. 15. 111) with instructions to assist the satrap Ariobarzanes, who was in open revolt against Artaxerxes, without violating their treaty with the king. On discovering that the island of Samos had been garrisoned by one Cyprothemis acting on the orders of Tigranes, satrap of the king, he proceeded to besiege the city, which he managed to capture after a 10 month campaign, probably ending towards the middle of 365.982 After this success Timotheus exiled much of the population and set up

981 These may have been mercenaries since Polyaeus says that Timotheus hired 7,000 men for the siege of Samos (Polyaeus. 3. 10. 9).  
982 Dem. 15. 9; Nep. Tim. 1. 2; Diod. 18. 8. 9; Isoc. 15. 108; Din. 1. 14; 3. 17; Polyaen. 3. 10. 10. On the date see Heskel (1997), 26-28; Bianco (2007), 49.
an Athenian cleruchy (Arist. *Rh. *2. 6. 24; Aesch. 1. 53; *IG II²* 1437. 20). It has often been purported that the disaffection of Athens’ Aegean allies began in response to this act. It is true that the cleruchy was an imperialistic deed that smacked of the fifth century Athenian empire; indeed, the Athenian orator Cydias is quoted to have bid the demos to consider the effect the cleruchy would have on their allies (Arist. *Rh. *2. 6. 24). However, it is generally admitted that Samos did not belong to the Second Athenian League and did not, therefore, have any legal protection under the Decree of Aristoteles. 983

Whether or not the cleruchy on Samos was legitimate it has frequently been assumed that Epameinondas’ naval project was instigated by this activity. 984 While this is an attractive notion, we must be wary when making causal connections between two events both of which are uncertainly dated. This uncertainty is such that one scholar has even conversely argued that Timotheus’ campaign was instigated by the construction of the Boeotian fleet. 985 As a result, the provenance of such an assumption depends greatly on our understanding of the chronology of events. The only explicit evidence we have is from Diodorus who places both the construction of the fleet and its campaign in 364/3. Of course, this may be doubtful since it would have been impossible to construct a fleet of any size and launch a campaign all in the same season; however, it would be unsurprising if this was the time in which the campaign was launched. Thus, the majority of scholars place the expedition in 364, 986 particularly since Orchomenus was destroyed this year supposedly when Epameinondas was absent. 987 Accepting this date presupposes that the naval project began substantially earlier; possibly as far back as the Peace in Susa (367) when funding from the Persians was plausibly secured. Buckler argues for an inception in 366 when Timotheus’ campaign had


984 Grote (1872), 292; Laistner (1936), 215; Cawkwell (1956), 71; Cawkwell (1972), 271; Hornblower (1982), 200; Hornblower (2011), 262; Tejada (2015), 57 n. 32.

985 Cook (1961), 70 n. 81.

986 On the date see in particular Cawkwell (1972), 272 n. 1; Buckler (1980a), 255-259. Van Wijk (2019), 86 n. 19, argues that both the vote in the assembly and the expedition occurred in the same year. This is possible only if the expedition was significantly smaller in scale than has generally been interpreted: even if, as he suggests, triremes were hired, the number of proxeny decrees, the construction of contemporary coastal fortifications and the previous acquisition of Oropus, all indicate that the naval scheme had been on the cards for quite some time and was, by no means, a modest endeavour.

987 See below, 282-283.
only just begun. Heskel, building on this, has developed the conjecture that Theban embassies were sent to several Aegean cities in 366/5 in an attempt to facilitate ties, in spite of Athens, prior to the construction of the navy. Though incapable of proof, it is certainly believable that diplomacy between Thebes and many of Athens’ allies began well before the grand expedition set forth since the appearance of a large Boeotian fleet could have provoked many different responses without being forewarned. While construction of the fleet may well have begun in 366, plans for a navy may have developed much earlier and Athenian naval activity, rather, provided only the opportune moment for Epameinondas and his colleagues to float the idea in the Theban assembly. It is then doubtful that the cleruchy in Samos instigated the Boeotian navy, let alone the naval expedition, since it was liable to set out as soon as it was ready. The cleruchy, however, provided an excellent opportunity as its initiation undoubtedly incited disaffection amongst members of the Athenian confederacy.

Aside from the Samian affair other activities in the Aegean may have further precipitated the movements of the Boeotian fleet. Once Timotheus had taken Samos, he sailed to the northeastern Aegean where he replaced Iphicrates who had been unsuccessfully campaigning against Amphipolis for about three years. Just prior to his arrival, Amphipolitans had given up their city to Olynthus in order to protect themselves from the Athenians (Dem. 23. 150). Timotheus probably spent the rest of 365 attempting to take Amphipolis without success since their defences were bolstered by the Olynthians. He did, however, form an alliance with the new Macedonian king, Perdiccas III. Then, in 364 he moved against the Chalcidice, where he managed to secure the cities of Potidaea and Torone, and would conduct operations there well into the following year (Diod. 15. 81. 6; Isoc. 15. 108). It was in this area that the Athenian navy was focused when Epameinondas set out at the helm of his newly fledged naval force.

988 Buckler (1980a), 160.
990 Diod. 15. 77. 5; Schol. Aesch. 2. 14; Polyaen. 3. 10. 14.
Before embarking on the expedition, a crew of up to 20,000\textsuperscript{992} was needed to fully man the ships, most of which were rowers. While the Boeotians could probably provide all the trierarchs and other officers required, Buckler argues that mercenaries, obtained from all over Greece, were utilized. This is plausible, but, because of the shear numbers and skill required to effectively use triremes, it may have been difficult to acquire so many mercenaries. Consequently, a large number of the rowers could have come from the disenfranchised population of Boeotia. It is possible that, during the time spent in planning and construction, much of the crew were trained in the ships that were already available at Boeotian ports.\textsuperscript{993} Thus, having established all the necessary facets of their voyage the fleet disembarked from the newly furnished ports in the Euripus.

It is, of course, impossible to determine the exact route that Epameinondas took and it may, in fact, be folly to presume that any attempt would ultimately be worthwhile since we will never know how accurate or egregiously mistaken it would be. However, for the sake of convenience, a theoretical route shall be utilized in the following discussion, partly as a way to determine the order of which port of call to examine first to last. Buckler assumes that Epameinondas headed north since he (also) assumes that Byzantium was the first place that the fleet visited. While Byzantium may have been the most significant given its importance for the Athenian grain trade in the Black Sea, Buckler also admits that Rhodes was an important waypoint for trade with Egypt.\textsuperscript{994} Thus, we cannot simply assume that Byzantium was the first port of call. My reasoning, rather, adopts the same logic I have earlier used, i.e. Diodorus arguably recorded the cities that Epameinondas visited in the same order that his source described them.\textsuperscript{995} This works out to be Rhodes, Chios and Byzantium (Diod. 15. 79. 1). Certainly, Chios would have been second (of the three) even if Byzantium was first. However, in light of epigraphic evidence that essentially proves that Epameinondas also visited Cnidus, we must entertain the possibility that he visited other places. Since the

\textsuperscript{992} This is assuming all 100 triremes were built and used on this expedition, which was not necessarily the case.

\textsuperscript{993} Buckler (1980a), 163-164. This would support the case for an earlier dating for the vote to build the navy, see above, 257-258.

\textsuperscript{994} Buckler (1980a), 169-171.

\textsuperscript{995} See above, 196.
majority of known sites are in the eastern or southeastern Aegean we may presume (though with little certainty) that more time was spent in this region. I will therefore suppose that the cities were visited in the following order, heading from south to north: Rhodes, Cnidus, Chios and, finally, Byzantium. It is, in addition, also worthwhile to include extra sites that Epameinondas plausibly visited based on some circumstantial evidence and some reasonable supposition. Much of the following discussion is admittedly theoretical, but this is necessary when such miniscule evidence is available to us.

If Epameinondas first set out in the direction of Rhodes, he would have left the Euripus through the southward passage. This would inevitably have led the fleet to sail past Attica. Since an Athenian force was sent out under Laches in order to circumvent the fleet it is quite possible that this is the point in which they disembarked. Buckler asserts that Laches met Epameinondas as he disembarked but did not pursue him since he headed for the northern passage of the Euripus: this is possible if that was the route he took. Conversely, Stylianou has suggested that Laches was guarding the Hellespont: this is also possible; but, since Diodorus explicitly states that Laches was sent out to stop Epameinondas, it is more credible that the two forces met as the Boeotian fleet was beginning its journey. Laches apparently had a sizeable force: we may imagine at least 30 or 40 triremes, if not significantly more. Despite this, he did not attack since he was probably outnumbered and, instead, sailed back home. Nor did Epameinondas make any attempt at open hostility with Athens: Buckler rightly asserts that it was not his intention to, at this stage, use the fleet as a weapon; rather, he planned to use it as a diplomatic tool to convince Athens’ allies to join the Boeotian federation. The fleet also lacked military experience and, although they would probably have defeated Laches, the skilled Athenian rowers could have caused many unnecessary losses. Having warded off the enemy, Epameinondas now had a free rein to visit the islands of the Aegean.

Once they departed the Euripus, the fleet inevitably would have journeyed through the Cyclades. Although there is no evidence that Epameinondas actually stopped at any of

996 Buckler (1980a), 169.
997 Stylianou (1998), 496.
998 See above, 234 n. 881.
999 Buckler (2003), 362.
these islands triremes very rarely spent nights at sea. The most the fleet could have achieved in a long day’s rowing was not much more than 230 kilometres (probably quite a bit less in this case)\textsuperscript{1000} and it is over 500 kilometres to Rhodes from Aulis. It therefore stands to reason that at least one or two of these islands were visited on their voyage to the eastern Aegean. While most poleis in the Cyclades had maintained a fairly good relationship with Athens, there were certainly a few potential candidates for joining the Theban’s escapade. The Cyclades had a long history of subjection to Athens. In the 470s, the Naxians attempted to secede from the Delian League in a revolt, which was subsequently suppressed by the Athenians (Thuc. 1. 98. 4; Polyaen. 1. 30. 8). There is some suggestion that Tenos, Andros and the cities of Ceos revolted in 450, though this is speculative.\textsuperscript{1001} Then, between 450-447, cleruchies were installed on both Naxos and Andros.\textsuperscript{1002} Later, after the Sicilian Expedition, along with Carystus in Euboea, hoplites from Andros and Tenos assisted the Four Hundred against Athens.\textsuperscript{1003} Throughout the 370s most of the Cyclades joined the Second Athenian League and appear to have been mostly content with this arrangement despite some small-scale contributions they had to make to the league.\textsuperscript{1004} It is possible that an inscription involving the settlement of a dispute at Paros is indicative of a revolt against Athens in 373;\textsuperscript{1005} however, it has more reasonably been argued that the inscription refers to an internal dispute that was settled by the synedrion of the league.\textsuperscript{1006}

While many of the islanders probably benefitted from adherence to Athens, the recent establishment of a cleruchy on Samos may well have brought a sour taste to many more of them, especially the ones old enough to remember. As we shall see, around the time

\textsuperscript{1000} This is based on the statement made by Xenophon in which he asserts that a trireme could make the journey from Byzantium to Heraclea Propontis, a distance of 230 kilometres, in a long day's rowing (Xen. \textit{Anab.} 6. 4. 2). During the middle of summer there is a little over 17 hours of nautical light in that part of the world (http://www.timeanddate.com/sun/turkey/istanbul). This could be achieved if the triremes were travelling about 7.8 knots (14.4 km/h), including at least an hour for lunch breaks. However, this would be the speed of a trireme in a hurry and probably could not be maintained for many days at a time. Between 5 and 6 (9.26-11.11 km/h) knots is perhaps the more believable speed for a fleet on a diplomatic mission. This would make an average daily distance around 148 to 178 kilometres. See also Morrison et al. (2000), 102-106, for the speed of triremes.

\textsuperscript{1001} Rutishauser (2012), 97-100.
\textsuperscript{1002} Diod. 11. 88. 3; Plut. \textit{Per.} 11. 5; Paus. 1. 27. 5.
\textsuperscript{1003} Rutishauser (2012), 126-135.
\textsuperscript{1004} Cargill (1981), 14-47; Rutishauser (2012), 158-164.
\textsuperscript{1005} Accame (1941), 229-244; Cargill (1981), 121, 163-164; Baron (2006), 379-395. For the inscription see Rhodes and Osborne (2003), 146-149.
\textsuperscript{1006} Cawkwell (1981), 50; Rhodes and Osborne (2003), 148-149; Hornblower (2011), 244; Rutishauser (2012), 161-164.
of the expedition (or shortly afterwards) the cities of Ceos (Iulis, Carthaea, Poeessa and Corressia) did revolt against Athens. This was followed by another revolt of Iulis. It is also possible that the island of Thera may have been involved in these events in some way. Ruzicka warns against associating these events with the actions of Epameinondas since they were “not likely to be of particular significance”. Indeed we must be careful associating any city with events that we do not have explicit evidence for, but the timing of these revolts is rather telling. Even if Epameinondas did not try to sway the people of the Cyclades, there is a good chance that the Boeotian fleet sailed through their territory, which could have had a significant impact itself. In spite of Ruzicka’s contention that the Cyclades were not important enough for the Thebans to bother with, they were obviously important to the Athenians, which would have been enough for Epameinondas. We may speculate that he was hoping to bring as many members of the Athenian League to his side as he possibly could.

Recent studies have argued that during this period the cities of Ceos seceded from the Athenians and joined the Boeotian League. There are three major reasons for this: one, Ceos would indeed revolt from Athens around this time; two, both Ceos and Boeotia had significant ties with the cities of Euboea, at this stage; three, on a list of Carthaean proxenoi one Cnidian was inscribed alongside the Boeotian proxenoi. This last factor has been interpreted to indicate diplomacy between Ceos and Cnidus, the latter of which certainly was visited by Epameinondas. There is much merit to this view since the fleet was liable to have sailed in the vicinity of the island; however, any visit to Ceos would have been dangerous due to its close proximity to Attica. If the Boeotians did stop at the island it would probably have been a brief stay. In any case, their mere presence in the area could well have spurred the Ceans, particularly as they learned more about the voyage. It is therefore possible further diplomacy between Thebes and Ceos followed the expedition.

The journey would inevitably have passed the island of Delos and it would be unsurprising if the Theban general made a quick stop to see the oracle. Indeed, there are a

1007 Dusanic (1978), 75-76; Dusanic (1980), 25 n. 119.
1008 Ruzicka (1998), 62 n. 11.
1011 See below, 263-265.
1012 This view is also suggested by Rhodes (2012), 120.
series of third century Delphic inscriptions, which refer to a crown sent back (ἀπελθών) by Epameinondas. Though the significance of this crown in relation to the name of Epameinondas is unknowable, it is not impossible to associate it with the naval expedition.1013

Having docked somewhere in the Cyclades for at least a night, the fleet could reasonably have gone straight to Rhodes at this point. However, it has been suggested that Epameinondas may have led the fleet to Crete and even Cyrene, on the northeast coast of Libya. Cyrene appears to have had some ties with the Second Athenian League during the 370s and 360s, though it is not clear to what extent. Anti-Athenian sentiments may have begun to surface when the city took in some refugees that Timotheus had expelled from Samos.1014 Then, following the Boeotian expedition, we find the brief existence of a radical democracy that was reformed by Plato and the Athenians, c. 363-362.1015 Dusanic argues that such a ‘democracy’ may have been established through the intervention of Epameinondas.1016 Though possible, this is much less plausible than other theories simply because of the distance: even from Crete the journey is nearly 300 kilometres. On the other hand, any anti-Athenian sentiment that developed between 365 and 363 was quite conceivably influenced by these events.

Crete, by contrast, is closer to the realms of possibility since it was not completely out of the way for the fleet to visit and, like Rhodes, it was potentially useful for policing the Athenian grain trade that came from Egypt. However, we have no real evidence, contextually or otherwise, that Crete was visited during the campaign and Dusanic’s only reason for arguing so is due to the fact that the island was important for the Athenian League and also fell under the designs of Mausolus.1017 Most of the cities of Crete do not appear to have been part of the Second Athenian League and had not suffered at the hands of Athens. Thus, with a

1013 IG XI 2. 164 A95, 189. 4, 199 B29, 202. 4; Ἀμεινώνδα in IG XI 2. 161 B46, 162 B37, 203 B86-87. Tréheux (1985), 23-25, suggests that the crown was taken by Epameinondas on his voyage and then sent back at a later date. See also Tuplin (2005), 55-58; van Wijk (2019), 93-94.
1014 Sherwin-White (1978), 67 n. 194.
1015 Dusanic (1978), 55-76.
1016 Dusanic (1980), 19 n. 81.
1017 Dusanic (1980), 24-25.
relatively neutral status, the Cretans had very little to gain from joining Epameinondas and, if he actually did visit the island, they would credibly have been hospitable but would probably have sent him away having achieved very little.

From a possible visit to the southern Aegean (or beyond) we now come to firmer ground with the fleet’s arrival to the Dodecanese islands. The largest and most influential of these was the island of Rhodes. It is probable that Epameinondas went to the city of Rhodes itself, which had been founded by the cities of Ialysus, Camirus and Lindus in 408/7 as the island’s capital. The country had been among the first to join (before 377) the Second Athenian League, which may have been due to a concern over the imperialistic actions of Sparta. Once the strength of the Spartans had been dismantled and the Athenians joined with their former enemies, many people in Rhodes may have seen little reason to remain in the league. Since, during the Peloponnesian war, they were subjected to Athenian tribute payment, the recent actions of Timotheus could have stirred a negative feeling amongst the people. Rhodes had also been a member of the ΣΥΝ coin league from the late fifth or early fourth century in which Thebes may have been attached, along with several other Aegean and Propontic poleis. This connection was surely remembered by many in Rhodes and it is possible that Epameinondas brought with him a mint of electrum coinage that was designed to reiterate this bond. Certainly we can imagine that this is exactly the sort of rhetoric that Epameinondas used, perhaps speaking to the Rhodian assembly, in an attempt to sway them against Athens.

A heavily fragmented reused proxeny decree found in Thebes, dating from this period, has been reconstructed to be for a Rhodian (SEG 25. 465). If accepted, it could indicate continuing diplomatic relations between the two poleis; however, the reconstruction has been disputed since our only indication of the proxenos being Rhodian is the presence of

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1018 Crete was mostly uninvolved in external affairs until the second of half of the fourth century and the Hellenistic period, see Willets (1977), 211-213.
1019 Diod. 13. 75. 1; Strabo 14. 2. 9-11; [Arist.] 43; Eust. ad Il. 2. 656; Conon 47.
1020 Cargill (1981), 38.
1021 See Appendix II.
1022 For Rhodes in the early fourth century see Berthold (1984), 19-31.
a rho and an omicron on the inscription.\textsuperscript{1024} Another connection may also be found in some Theban coins that bear the first part of Epameinondas’ name (ΕΠΠΑ/ΕΠΑΜ) and a rose, which may have been minted in commemoration of his visit.\textsuperscript{1025} Again, this view has been questioned,\textsuperscript{1026} though the significance of the rhodon on Theban coinage has yet to be conclusively explained.\textsuperscript{1027} More recently, Schachter has developed an interesting thesis from a lost inscription at Aulis bearing the name of Tlepolemus, who was a mythical founder of Rhodes and a son of Heracles, arguing that a cult of the hero was established at the port in honour of the diplomatic arrangements between Rhodes and Thebes.\textsuperscript{1028} While ultimately impossible to prove, as we shall see, similar events may have taken place at other poleis as a result of, or in preparation for, the expedition. Unfortunately, the evidence concerning the relationship between Rhodes and Thebes at this time is largely circumstantial and uncertainly associated with these events; however, their existence is most easily explained by this association. An optimistic interpretation would therefore conclude that diplomatic relations between Thebes and Rhodes were prolific and Rhodian enthusiasm for joining the Boeotian naval venture was apparent.

Once his business in Rhodes had been concluded Epameinondas led the fleet northwest to the Carian port city of Cnidus. The journey could have been completed in less than a day of rowing, possibly stopping for lunch on the island of Syme, where the bay of Panormitis could have provided an excellent site for beaching the ships. On their arrival at Cnidus, the fleet must have been well-received and afforded full docking privileges. Our evidence for the visit to this large port city comes from a proxeny decree found in Burgazada, Turkey,\textsuperscript{1029} which confirms that Epameinondas was made a proxenos of Cnidus and, since this naval voyage was the only time he was known to be in that part of the world, it was almost certainly enacted on this occasion. The terms of the decree ensured that Epameinondas and his descendants were made proxenoi and that he (and presumably his fleet) be granted the right of access to the harbours of Cnidus (\textit{SEG} 44. 901).

\textsuperscript{1024} Buckler (2008), 204.
\textsuperscript{1025} This suggestion was originally suggested by Sir Edward Robinson and published in Kraay (1976), 114 n. 1. It was later further argued by Hepworth (1989), 39-40.
\textsuperscript{1026} Schachter (2014), 327 n. 61;
\textsuperscript{1027} Schachter (2016b), 46-47, suggests that the various symbols on the magistrate coins may have identified “individual workshops” that minted the coins.
\textsuperscript{1028} Schachter (2014), 313-331.
\textsuperscript{1029} Blümel (1994), 157-158.
Unlike the other states that we know were visited Cnidus provides a stark contrast from the others: though the city had been a member of the Delian League, it had revolted from Athens in 412 and joined the Spartans. They later joined the ΣΥΝ coin league of the late fifth, early fourth centuries. However, after the Corinthian war, by the terms of the King’s peace in 387/6 the city belonged to Persia. Epameinondas’ friendly relations with Cnidus are indicative of Thebes’ symmachia with Artazerxes II. This meant that the Boeotian fleet had the legal right to secure some assistance from Greek members of the Persian Empire. Though military support may be less plausible since it could have been considered a breach of Persia’s precarious peace with Athens, they could grant docking rights and provide a market. As a result, a proxeny was the perfect alternative since it was more of a personal bonding between the city of Cnidus and Epameinondas rather than with Thebes or Boeotia. But, in practice, it certainly did foster a diplomatic connection between the two political entities.

While the decree does not imply the existence of a formal alliance the awarding of the proxeny was not merely a symbolic gesture from the Cnidians. By accepting the title Epameinondas was taking on a significant political and social position that could entail great responsibility. In general, the status of proxenos meant that the receiver would have a particular bond with the city that awarded it. They would earn this title because the city deemed that they had either provided some sort of service or would do so in the future. There was also an expectation that the recipient, and their descendants (ἐκγονος), would continue to serve as a liaison between the city that awarded the proxeny and the city of the recipient.1030 Thus, Epameinondas may have made an agreement with the Cnidians. One may speculate that the only thing the Theban could offer them was military protection, if his naval endeavour were successful. On the other hand, they would benefit him by allowing his fleet to use the ports of Cnidus, perhaps even as a base. Indeed, the right to sail in and out of Cnidus unmolested is the main stipulation of the decree that survives, though such a clause is a standard for Cnidian proxeny decrees (e.g. IK. Knidos 1. 1-10). Based on other examples the decree for Epameinondas was liable to extend these docking rights to include “in times of war and peace” (ἐμ πολέμωι καὶ ἐν ἰρήναι). Thus, regardless of the outcome of the naval

1030 On proxeny in general see Mack (2015), esp. 23-89.
program Epameinondas would still have a duty to maintain ties with Cnidus. There is perhaps, as noted above, some indication for this in a Carthaean list of proxenoi.

After what was probably a few days at the Cnidic peninsula, the fleet headed north across the mouth of the Ceramic Gulf. We know that Chios was certainly en route during this part of the voyage; however, it was over 200 kilometres away (as the crow flies) and we can therefore surmise that they stopped elsewhere during this stretch. The most obvious port of call from Cnidus was the island of Cos, which was a journey of just over 30 kilometres (to the city of Cos); thus, it could have been reached in just a few hours of travel. Cos had been a member of the Delian League and had to pay tribute, but it is not certain whether a cleruchy was ever installed.\(^{1031}\) While they joined the Spartans in 407 (Xen. \textit{Hell.} 1. 5. 1; Diod. 13. 69. 5), they would secede from them after the Battle of Cnidus in 394 (Diod. 14. 84. 3). It is not clear whether they joined the Second Athenian League since their name was not inscribed on the stele of Aristoteles, but they would later take part in the Social War against Athens (Diod. 16. 7. 3; Dem. 15. 3, 27).\(^{1032}\) In 366/5 the Coan poleis of Astypalaia and Cos Meropis synoecised into the city of Cos, which was made the capital of the island as a unified state (Diod. 15. 76. 2; Strabo 14. 2. 19). Though there is no direct evidence, the proximity of this event to the Boeotian naval expedition is a striking coincidence.

It has earlier been suggested that the Coan synoecism occurred as a result of Epameinondas’ voyage.\(^{1033}\) Chronologically the two events cannot have, strictly speaking, had much to do with one another since the expedition occurred up to two years after the founding of the city of Cos. Sherwin-White further points out that the Coans may also have harboured some hostility towards Thebes’ hegemonic activities since they would soon after provide citizenship to refugees from Orchomenus.\(^{1034}\) However, since the city was destroyed during the naval voyage, it is unlikely to have had any influence on Coan opinion of the Thebans, by this stage. Heskel surmises that Theban ambassadors were sent to Cos in 366/5,

\(^{1031}\) Mattingly (1996), 65.

\(^{1032}\) Cargill (1981), 37-38.

\(^{1033}\) Schäfer (1856), 105.

\(^{1034}\) Schol. Theocrit. \textit{Idyll} 7. 21a. Sherwin-White (1978), 64-65. For the scholia of Theocritus’ \textit{Idyll} 7. 21a, see Wendel (1914), 84-85.
which she argues attempted to secure an alliance but were unsuccessful.\textsuperscript{1035} The synoecism itself was more liable to have been directly influenced by the synoecism at Halicarnassus by Mausolus, the satrap of Caria.\textsuperscript{1036} The nature of Coan politics would imply that the move was more economically motivated than militarily; however, they also gave support to refugees from Samos, which could indicate resentment towards Athenian naval policy (SEG 1. 354).\textsuperscript{1037} This means that Cos could well have been quite open to the idea of an alliance with Thebes, but their tendency to remain fairly neutral probably prevented them from concluding any kind of formal alliance. Based on these arguments, a visit from Epameinondas, during his voyage, is quite plausible, but it is doubtful that anything of lasting value was achieved, except, perhaps to add to the anti-Athenian atmosphere that was surely brewing.

Between Cos and Chios there was still a long voyage ahead and many other potential stops along the way. Though Samos is improbable the fleet may have made stops at Halicarnassus,\textsuperscript{1038} Iasus and Ephesus.\textsuperscript{1039}

From Ephesus to Chios it is a 120 kilometre journey, which could have been achieved in one day of rowing. After reaching the very western end of the Çeşme peninsula and proceeding northwest, the fleet would have just been able to see the city of Chios on the island of its namesake. The Chians had a tradition of shipbuilding and would have been an important addition to the alliance; indeed, as part of the Delian League they provided the Athenians with ships rather than money during the fifth century. They were one of the founding members of the Second Athenian League but would later revolt against it in the Social war. There may be some indication of Boeotian-Chian diplomatic relations in the form of a fourth century stele that refers to a Boeotian Demeter (SEG 17. 396), which may be, as at Rhodes, another symbolic cult exchange.\textsuperscript{1040} If such a tie was cemented on this occasion, or

\textsuperscript{1035} Heskel (1997), 65-66.
\textsuperscript{1036} Sherwin-White (1978), 64-72; Demand (1990), 127-132.
\textsuperscript{1037} Sherwin-White (1978), 66-67; Hornblower (1982), 103, 133-134, 199
\textsuperscript{1038} There were undoubtedly several political and economic reasons to do so but the rise in Athenian naval strength during this period is a highly plausible factor. Since Mausolus would later support the anti-Athenian belligerents of the Social War, it is clear that his interests, at this stage, aligned with Epameinondas' (or at least were not at odds). Callisthenes FGrH 124 F25 = Strabo 13. 1. 59; Plin. Nat. Hist. 5. 29; Vitru. 2. 8. 10-15. Cf. Rzepka BN/ 124 F25; Hornblower (1982), 78-105; Demand (1990), 120-127.
\textsuperscript{1039} Both Iasus and Ephesus were involved in the issuing of ΣΥΝ coins in the early fourth century.
\textsuperscript{1040} Schachter (2014), 327; van Wijk (2019), 88.
earlier, it is imaginable that Epameinondas took part in, or oversaw, some form of ceremonial ritual in order to initiate the new practice. In either case, from Diodorus’ statement it appears that the visit was relatively successful and the Chians were supportive of the Theban’s cause.

From Chios the next logical waypoint was at the isle of Lesbos, on which the most important settlement was the city of Mytilene. The city lies on the western side of the island, facing the coastline of Asia Minor on the Strait of Mytilene. In 427 the Mytileneans suffered greatly at the hands of Athens when 1,000 of their citizens were executed, the city walls were torn down, their possessions seized and their hinterland divided amongst Athenian cleruchs (Thuc. 3. 50). The city was a founding member of the Second Athenian League and, probably in 375, allowed an Athenian garrison to occupy it (SEG 19 204). It was a significant sea power, producing large numbers of triremes. While there might be some historical precedent for disdain towards Athens, Mytilene had been a loyal ally since at least 389. In any case, if the garrison still occupied the city, the Boeotian fleet would undoubtedly have avoided it. Another important Lesbian city was Methymna, which is on the northern side of the island. Even more so than Mytilene, Methymna was inclined towards the Athenians, apparently never having to provide tribute or receive a cleruchy during the fifth century. They were also founding members of the Second Athenian League and producers of triremes. It seems that most poleis on Lesbos were fairly loyal to the Athenians during this period and it is credible that Epameinondas’ cruise had no major impact upon them; however, since the island was an important military asset to the Athenians, it is also credible that he attempted to persuade them to revolt. We must remember that the island is directly en route between Chios and the Bosporus.

Once the fleet had reached cape Lectum (modern Baba), the most western point of Asia and the Troad, it would have headed north along the final stretch before the Hellespont. Possible stops along the way could have been Larisa on the coast to the west of modern Kösedere or further north at Colonae, which lay to the west of modern Akçaçale. Another option along this stretch is the island of Tenedos, which is about five kilometres (at its nearest

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1041 See also van Wijk (2019), 94-95, who suggests that previous ties of kinship may have been exploited, cf. Fragoulaki (2013), 110-111.
1042 On the cities of Lesbos see Hansen et al. (2004), 1018-1032.
point) off the Turkish coast, just to the northwest of the modern port village of Dalyan. This polis had been a member of the Delian League and was currently a member of the Second Athenian League. It would have little obvious reason for wanting to support the Thebans; however, an interesting inscription dated c. 355-346, refers to a Tenedian proxenos, Athenodoros, in Boeotia who provided 1,000 drachmas as a contribution during the Sacred War (IG VII 2418). Though we cannot know exactly when Athenodoros was made a proxenos, it has been suggested that it may echo Boeotian naval policy in the area, since Tenedos’ position would have been useful for hindering the Athenian grain trade. However, because Tenedos would remain loyal to Athens, and even be honoured by them in 340/39 (IG II² 233), it does not seem tenable that the island ever seceded from the league. On the other hand, Athenodoros was clearly a Boeotian sympathizer and may well have obtained his contribution from a number of Tenedians. It is therefore plausible that Epameinondas’ voyage facilitated a certain amount of support from Tenedos, which however, did not affect the island’s overall policy towards Athens.

The opening of the Hellespont is about 23 kilometres from Tenedos. From there it is a journey of some 65 kilometres to the entrance of the Propontis. To Byzantium through the Propontis it is over 200 kilometres. The journey through the Hellespont could have been achieved in a day without too much trouble but, because the strait is vital for access to the Black Sea, a stop or two along the way is likely. While all the cities on the Propontic coast were undoubtedly part of the Persian Empire, the cities on the south coast of the Chersonesus are a different matter. The only city recorded as a member of the Second Athenian League is the city of Elaeus, which was situated not far beyond the entrance of the strait, at the eastern end of Morto Bay. Other than this it is assumed that the entire peninsula was controlled by Ariobarzanes. It is generally thought that, in 365, the cities of Sestus and Crithote were given to Timotheus for services to Ariobarzanes; however, as has been established, the Athenian was most plausibly still campaigning around Chalcidice in 364 and would not go to the Hellespont until after Epameinondas had left. Thus, Sestus and Crithote were, at this stage, more reasonably controlled by the Persians.

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1043 Fossey (1994), 35; Fossey (2014), 3. See also van Wijk (2019), 94 n. 57, who notes that Aeolian kinship ties between Boeotia and Tenedos could have been stressed to facilitate diplomacy.
Ariobarzanes, the Persian satrap of Hellespontine Phrygia, as early as 366, was in a state of revolt against Artaxerxes. The satrap and his lackey, Philiscus, had been fortifying Hellenic cities, including Atarneus, Assus and Adramyttium, from which they were besieged by Autophradates and Mausolus, possibly in 366/5.\textsuperscript{1045} It is not certain what the exact situation was in 364 but, since Ariobarzanes would later give the Athenians control of Sestus and Crithote, the Hellespont was probably still under his authority, or possibly that of Philiscus (Dem. 23. 141-143). Though the satrap did not have any strategic reason to be hostile to the Thebans, their alliance with Persia and antipathy towards Athens could well have constituted a long-term threat to his independent rule of the territory. We must remember that Ariobarzanes and Philiscus had been made Athenian citizens and, whether or not it mattered to them, they were honour bound to side with Athens. The duo also may have had a personal aversion to the Thebans since it was because of them that Philiscus failed to gain Greek military support in 368.\textsuperscript{1046} Thus, the fleet may not have been entirely welcome at ports held by Ariobarzanes.

Lampsacus has been suggested as a possible stopping point. This is a reasonable supposition since it was amongst the most prosperous cities in the area and a natural place to stop if the fleet came from Tenedos. The city was also probably part of the alliance of the ΣYN coinage league. On the other hand, Lampsacus was most assuredly controlled by Philiscus, who was assassinated by two Lampsacenes (Dem. 23. 142). But it is not certain whether he was actually present, at this point, making it possible that a faction in the city wished to secede from Ariobarzanes. Either way, the Boeotian fleet certainly proceeded through the Hellespont.

After quickly navigating the Hellespont the ships entered the Propontis (the Sea of Marmara). On the way to Byzantium a stop at one of the other cities of Propontic Thrace would be expected. The obvious port of call was the city of Perinthus, which was a journey of about 130 kilometres from Lampsacus, situated on a small peninsula at the approximate

\textsuperscript{1045} Arist. Pol. 2. 1267a; Xen. Ages. 2. 26; Dem 15. 9; 23. 141-143. On the Satrap’s Revolt, see above, 176 n. 685.

\textsuperscript{1046} See above, 176-178.
centre of the north coast. It had been a member of the Second Athenian League but, around this time, was subject to the control of Philiscus, and had endured hostilities from Cotys (Dem. 23. 142; Arist. Econ. 2. 1351a). The chronology of these events is, however, uncertain but a possible scenario may be that the Perinthians were dissatisfied with Athens’ disinterest in providing protection from the Odrysians and consequently appealed to Philiscus, who subsequently occupied the city with mercenaries. If the opinion of Demosthenes is anything to go by Philiscus was a brutal man who committed many atrocities; thus, his influence on the city may have provoked great contempt amidst the populace. To be sure, Epameinondas would not have entered a city occupied with soldiers that were potentially hostile, but this was not necessarily the case in 364. There are, at least, two potential contexts in which the fleet visited Perinthus: firstly, the city could still have been an independent member of the league but, due to aggression from Cotys, were happy to consider joining the Theban naval alliance; however, since the endeavour did not come to full fruition, the city was forced to seek help from elsewhere. The second possibility places Philiscus’ occupation before 364, which would mean that Epameinondas offered them protection after the garrison had left. Accordingly, they were forced to return to Athens’ side. A decade later, they would again secede from Athens and form an alliance with Philip II, in 352/1, because of continuing problems with Cotys (Schol. Aeschin. 2. 81).

These rather attractive reconstructions of events may be a stretch; however, there is some potential evidence that connects Perinthus to the naval expedition: a recently published fragmentary Boeotian proxeny decree, which has been dated to the 360s, for two individuals (SEG 58. 447). Unfortunately, the section that indicates the proxenos’ city ethnic has been fragmented and all we have are the last six letters: -νθίως. Vlachogianni has argued in favour of restoring it to refer to either Olynthus or Corinth, while discounting Perinthus due to its ties with Athens. However, as Russell notes, Epameinondas was definitely in the area and, as I have argued, Perinthens’ feelings towards Athens were not necessarily that positive around this time. It is important to remember that a proxeny was very different from a formal

alliance: one could be a proxenos for a polis even if they were technically at war with each other.\textsuperscript{1050} The city was also a natural waypoint when crossing the Propontis, making it readily conceivable that the fleet did indeed stop there. Although Olynthus and Corinth are both plausible options, there is no reason to discount the possibility that the decree refers to two Perinthians.

With another 90 kilometres of travel Epameinondas finally made it to, what may well have been, the most crucial polis to assume into an alliance, Byzantium. The city lay at the very head of the peninsula between the Bosporus and the Golden Horn, known today as the Promontory of Sarayburnu or Seraglio Point. Byzantium’s strategic position for guarding access to the Black Sea made the city incredibly important to the Athenian grain trade. It was also a significant sea power, having provided ships and crew to the Delian League in the fifth century. The city was part of the ΣΥΝ coinage alliance and was a founding member of the Second Athenian League.\textsuperscript{1051} Since the Byzantines would, in 357, join in revolt against Athens, it is conceivable that they would entertain the notion at this stage.

In 362, Byzantium, in collaboration with Calchedon and Cyzicus, began to forcibly beach Athenian grain ships and made them unload their cargo ([Dem.] 50. 6-7, 17-19; 45. 64; Dem. 5. 25). These events have been interpreted as resulting directly from Epameinondas’ voyage.\textsuperscript{1052} Apollodorus’ speech indicates that the primary reason for these actions was due to a lack of grain and further economic reasons, for the seizing of ships’ cargo, are indicated by Pseudo Aristotle ([Arist.] \textit{Econ}. 2. 1346b). Some scholars have questioned whether this should be considered overt hostility towards the Athenians since they were not the only ones targeted.\textsuperscript{1053} But, in spite of this, we should not underestimate the importance of the Black Sea grain trade: Athens undoubtedly considered the actions hostile.

We may have further evidence of the visit to Byzantium from another Boeotian proxeny decree honouring a Byzantine (\textit{IG VII} 2408). The recipient was awarded exemption from the tax on foreigners, protection against seizure of property and, unique to this decree, a

\textsuperscript{1050} See above, 264-265.
\textsuperscript{1051} Loukopolou and Laitar (2004), 915-918.
\textsuperscript{1052} Accame (1941), 179 n. 3.
\textsuperscript{1053} Cawkwell (1972), 270 n. 4; Roy (1994), 202 n. 17; Buckler (2008), 176.
guarantee of personal safety. It has been suggested that the Byzantine may have been in the employ of Epameinondas for assistance with either naval policy or maritime strategy.\textsuperscript{1054} It has also been argued that the Byzantine was awarded such an honour as a result of contributing to the defection of Byzantium from the Athenian League.\textsuperscript{1055} Another potential cult exchange has also been observed by Schachter who speculates that the cult of Achilles in Tanagra may have come from Byzantium where worship of that figure was widespread from the Troad to the Black Sea.\textsuperscript{1056}

A fragment of Ephorus’ account of this period (book 23) attests that the town of Chrysopolis, which was traditionally controlled by Chalcis, was awarded to “the allies” (Ephorus \textit{FGH} 70 F83 = Steph. Byz. \textit{s. v. Χρυσόπολις}). It has been suggested that a plausible context for the fragment is Epameinondas’ visit to Byzantium, where he may have awarded the city with possession of Chrysopolis in return for agreeing to join Thebes.\textsuperscript{1057} Buckler disputes this by pointing out that Chrysopolis (via Chalcis) was part of the Persian Empire and was therefore not liable to be awarded by the Thebans to Byzantium, which was technically allied to Athens.\textsuperscript{1058} However, since Epameinondas’ meddlings in Byzantium were, for all intents and purposes, anti-Athenian, it is not impossible for Artaxerxes to have nominally approved such an arrangement, if it proved to be useful.\textsuperscript{1059} We also find that this relationship with Thebes continued into the 350s when Byzantium contributed to the war effort against Phocis (\textit{IG VII} 2418) and a formal alliance is possibly attested by Demosthenes (Dem. 9. 34).\textsuperscript{1060}

At some point during the expedition, Epameinondas received a plea for assistance from Heraclea Pontica (Just. 16. 4. 1-4). The city was undergoing \textit{stasis} between the ruling class and the common people; as a result, the council requested help from Timotheus, who refused. Then, Epameinondas was also beseeched, but he refused, possibly because he did not

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{1054} Roesch (1984), 56.
\bibitem{1056} Schachter (2014), 328. See also van Wijk (2019), 88.
\bibitem{1057} Stylianou (1998), 95, 497.
\bibitem{1058} Buckler (2008), 176 n. 38.
\bibitem{1059} Russell (2016), 188 n. 45.
\bibitem{1060} Mackil (2013), 80 n. 128, 84 n. 146, though the passage may actually refer to Philip II, see Russell (2016), 69.
\end{thebibliography}
want to get too involved in the internal affairs of a Persian held city. Buckler has suggested that the Boeotian fleet had actually sailed all the way to Heraclea, which is a journey of over 220 kilometres from Byzantium. There is some indication of a contemporary connection in the form of an epitaph for a citizen of Heraclea who died at Thebes longing for his homeland. The inscription mentions that the city will undergo a perishing grief (ἀχος φθιμένου), which may well refer to the tyranny of Clearchus (IG VII 2531). However, since Epameinondas refused the plea, it is doubtful that he would have spared the time and expense to go to a city that was not strategically beneficial to his current endeavour. It is consequently more plausible that embassies were sent to the Theban when he was relatively close to the area, making Byzantium a good option, though he could well have been anywhere else in the Propontis. Because of his refusal, the oligarchs were forced to seek help from the exiled Clearchus, who would, shortly afterwards (364/3), make himself tyrant of Heraclea (Diod. 15. 81. 5).

From Byzantium it is possible that the fleet also made a stop in Calchedon, particularly if Epameinondas did indeed give the Calchedonian controlled town of Chrysopolis to the Byzantines. We also find the city joining Byzantium, in 362, beaching Athenian grain ships ([Dem]. 50. 6, 17). While this indicates an alliance with Byzantium, it has been inferred that the city was likewise allied with Thebes. Since Calchedon was technically under Persian control it is debateable that the city would involve itself in hostility towards Athens; however, Demosthenes, in a speech delivered in 353 or 351, implies that the city, along with Selymbria, were taken over by the Byzantines (Dem. 15. 26). Such an occasion is also mentioned by Theopompus, commenting on Byzantine democratic drunkenness (Theopompus FGrH 115 F62 = Athen. 12. 526e-f). It is possible that this was part of a Byzantine expansionist policy during this period, though it is hard to reconcile their support of Thebes and apparent antagonism towards Persia. We may further consider the possibility that the Persians were willing to actually cede some of their territory in order to promote anti-Athenian activity without actually committing acts of war themselves.

1062 Buckler (1980a), 172; Buckler (2003), 363.
1064 Heskel (1997), 65 n. 27.
1065 Avram (2004), 980.
1066 Russell (2016), 71-72.
Having finished with the Bosporus, it was time to head west back towards the Hellespont. There is a possibility that another stop was made, this time in the southern Propontis, at the polis of Cyzicus. The city lay on the southwestern side (near modern Belkis) on an island known as the Arctonessus, which is now a tombolo of Anatolia that may have been connected to the mainland by Alexander the Great (Plin. *Nat. Hist.* 5. 40). By this stage, however, the isthmus did not exist and the western harbour could have been accessed, coming from the east, without having to circumnavigate the entire island. From Byzantium it is a journey of over 120 kilometres, which could have been achieved in a hard day’s rowing, perhaps lunching on the island of Imrali Adasi. The city was part of the ΣYN coinage league and appears to have been part of the Second Athenian League (Schol. Dem. 21. 173), though this is not certain. Shortly after Epameinondas’ visit to the area the city was being besieged, possibly by the Persians, during which Timotheus arrived to lend support (Diod. 15. 81. 5; Nep. *Timoth.* 1. 2). In spite of this, in 362, Cyzicus would join Byzantium and Calchedon in the beaching of an Athenian grain ship, which may indicate sympathetic ties with Thebes or, at least, Thebes’ allies, plausibly instigated by Epameinondas’ meddling.

The fleet could now begin the journey homeward. From Cyzicus to the entrance of the Hellespont it is about 180 kilometres, which could be completed in a day though they possibly stayed somewhere along the way. The distance from the Hellespont back to Aulis is over 440 kilometres, which would have taken two or three days. This also would have included stops though few more were of significance. There has been some suggestion for Olynthus being on the agenda, however, this would have added nearly 200 kilometres to the journey and Timotheus was liable to be in the vicinity with an Athenian fleet. I would thus argue that that whole section of the Aegean (northwest) was generally avoided. After what was almost certainly a rather long voyage the grand expedition finally made berth in its Boeotian ports and, before long, the crew was probably disbanded.

1067 Grote (1872), 292, suggested that it was Epameinondas who besieged Cyzicus, but this is improbable since, other than the altercation with Laches, there is no reason to think that the fleet engaged in any further military action, especially as they would have had little to gain and much to risk from attacking the Cyzicenes. Stylianou (1998), 505, is open to Theban involvement but also suggests that it was rebels against the king.
1068 Heskel (1997), 65; Avram (2004), 980, 984.
A low estimate for the overall distance of the voyage is somewhat more than 2,000 kilometres but, including potential stops, is nearly 3,000. With minimal stops the whole voyage would have taken at least 13 days, which would make a total of 26 stops. At the higher end, including potential stops, it would have taken at least 20 days, assuming some of these places were visited for a couple of hours at a time and roughly 25 days if, at each of these potential stops, the fleet stayed the night. We must also account for the fact that some of the stops may have required Epameinondas to stay for a few nights in order to put forth his proposal to the heads of states. This would mean, at a rough estimate, that the entire expedition probably took around a month to a month and a half. For each ship of 200 sailors being paid one drachma per day, one talent would be needed for a month. Therefore, it would have cost between 100 and 150 talents for the Thebans to float the expedition.1070

**Conclusion: The Achievement of the Boeotian Naval Project.**

The most controversial aspect of the whole naval affair is the extent to which it can be deemed a success. Diodorus admits that Epameinondas did not, in the end, achieve what he had set out to achieve but believes that he could have: “If, then, this man had lived for a longer time, undeniably, the Thebans, with their leadership by land, would have gained rule of the sea” (Diod. 15. 79. 2).1071 This statement, however much it praises the general, implies that the Theban bid for sea supremacy was an ultimate failure. This is, of course, undeniable since it is apparent that the fleet would never sail again. Plutarch too admits that the great Theban’s sea endeavour did not live up to his reputation. On the other hand, Plutarch attempts to explain away this failing, quoting Plato, by saying that Epameinondas did not want his fellow citizens to become decadent seamen (Plut. Phil. 14. 1-2; cf. Plat. Laws 706). Because of this, modern scholarship has generally tended to conclude that the naval project achieved nothing significant.1072

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1070 That is if they adopted the Athenian policy for payment of sailors (Thuc. 6. 31. 3).
1071 εἰ μὲν οὖν ὁ ἀνήφρος ὑπερασπητός ἔπεζαν, ὡμολογημένως ἢν ὁ Θηβαῖος τῇ κατὰ γῆν ἱγμονίᾳ καὶ τὴν τῆς θαλάττης ἱρ coined προσπεκτήσαντο.
More recent work, however, hinges on the interpretation of Diodorus’ use of the word ἰδίας, in which he says: ἰδίας τὰς πόλεις τοῖς Θηβαίοις ἐποίησεν (Diod. 15. 79. 1-2). Sherman’s translation, “made the cities friendly to the Thebans”,1073 has been deemed too weak (certainly too vague),1074 while taking it to refer to an actual formal alliance,1075 is perhaps too strong.1076 Because of this some scholars, such as Berthold, have erred on the side of caution, arguing that Diodorus should not be taken literally; rather, his statement “reflects some sort of favorable response from the cities”.1077 Schachter too, more recently, has taken this stance, reasoning that the phrase means that Epameinondas “won them [the cities] over to the Theban cause”.1078 Indeed, ἰδίας is most often used by Diodorus to refer to someone’s personal character traits (such as ἀρετή or ἀνδρεία) and personal ownership of something (most particularly with that of soldiers, ships and land), but on a number of occasions it refers to someone’s fatherland, city or fellow citizens.

Buckler cites two instances1079 where the word is used similarly to our current example: the first is when Aristeides secured alliances from the Greek states with Athens, thus forming the Delian League (Diod. 11. 44. 6). Here we get “τὰς πόλεις… ἰδίας ἐποίησε τοῖς Ἀθηναίοις”, where it is clear that the formulation of the phrase is almost identical with the one in question. Oldfather translated this to mean that the states were “made adherents of the Athenians. In this case the situation most certainly does refer to an alliance; however, as Buckler notes, ἰδίας is used to indicate that the poleis were making their decisions independently. The second example is from 319 where Antigonus Monophthalmus attempted to lift the siege of Cyzicus, which was being attacked by Arridaeus, satrap of Hellespontine Phrygia (Diod. 18. 52. 1). Diodorus says that κρίνας δὲ τὴν κινδυνεύουσαν πόλιν ἰδίαν κατασκευάσασθαι. Like the other two examples, ἰδίας is paired with πόλιν, where Geer translates the phrase as “Deciding to get possession of the endangered city”.1080 Buckler again argues that ἰδίας means that the city of Cyzicus is being referred to as an independent

1073 Sherman (1952), 169.
1074 Hornblower (1982), 200 n. 137.
1075 Ruzicka (1998), 60.
1076 Buckler (2008), 200-202. See Russell (2016), 187 n. 21, for bibliography and the various interpretations.
1077 Berthold (1984), 29 n. 35.
1078 Schachter (2014), 325.
1079 Buckler (2008), 200.
1080 Geer (1947), 155
city, “owing allegiance” to no-one. However, in this case, a more natural interpretation is that Diodorus is saying that Antigonus, who is the subject of the sentence, was attempting to procure the city as his own personal possession. To this we may add an example from the contents of book 12 stating “the Athenians and the Lacedaemonians had concluded an alliance between them” (Diod. 12. contents). Here, an actual *symmachia* is explicitly stated but *ἰδία* is used to refer to the private nature of the arrangement, i.e. an alliance between the two states, but no other.

It is clear, as Buckler argues, that *ἰδία* is not a technical term; rather, a stylistic device, though he may not be correct in saying that, coupled with *πόλεις*, it necessarily refers to a “state capable of making its own political decisions”. Instead the term seems to indicate the personal/private nature of the affair with the city. Coming back to the case in 364 our only conclusive evidence for Epameinondas’ diplomacy during the naval endeavour is from the Cnidian proxeny decree. The decree itself is very much a personal arrangement with the polis, which is distinct from the public nature of formal *symmachia*. It is then apt to propose that similar diplomacy occurred with many of the other cities that Epameinondas visited. Russell has recently argued that, rather than an alliance, *ἰδίας* refers to an arrangement in which the Theban convinced the cities (particularly Byzantium) to beg in their anti-Athenian activity without the necessary state of revolt required if they were to explicitly side with Boeotia *contra* Athens. This would make sense if the agreements made were purely personal (with Epameinondas) rather than overtly political, i.e. on a public level. From this analysis it is then apparent that formal alliances were not concluded with most of the cities visited; instead, a series of under-the-table agreements were made, which, however, had the ultimate intention to foster an alliance purposed to combat the power of Athens.

However one interprets this evidence, it seems entirely probable that many of the subsequent events, as highlighted above, throughout the Aegean, Hellespont, Propontis and Bosporus were directly influenced by the Boeotian naval expedition. While it is perhaps

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1081 Ἀθηναίων καὶ Λακεδαιμονίων ἰδία συνθεμένων συμμαχίαν.
1082 We find a similar usage of the term in Diod 15. 8. 4. (συμμαχίαν ἰδία), invoking a private alliance between a state and an individual.
1083 Russell (2016), 72-73. See also van Wijk (2019), 105, who is also in favour of Byzantine adherence to Thebes.
doubtful (and certainly incapable of proof) that any formal alliance was ever concluded with any of the poleis visited (including Byzantium), there is enough evidence to show a surge in the unrest of Athens’ allies between 364 and the onset of the Social War in 357. It is surely too far to say that the Social War actually began seven years earlier than the dating that Diodorus provides, but it is far from unusual for him to simplify and condense events that were actually far more involved and complicated, thereby offering us a heavily skewed sense of the chronology. We must therefore at least entertain the clear plausibility that the results of Epameinondas’ naval project were indeed far-reaching and thus provided the backdrop to the events leading up to the fracturing of the Second Athenian League.

It was here that all Boeotian naval activity came to an end. What was to be the projected future for the fleet? We can only speculate, but it is easy to imagine that Epameinondas wished to continue with further expeditions that would ultimately lead to a major naval confederacy with the power of defeating Athens. Unfortunately, this was never to be the case. The expense of maintaining the fleet was enormous and, without conducting any major military actions, it is apparent that no further funding was acquired. It has also been speculated that, since Artaxerxes expected the fleet to be used as a weapon against Athens, he was disappointed with Epameinondas’ lack of results and thus refused to pay the Thebans any more. Whether this was indeed the case or not, trouble brewing on the mainland would undoubtedly have prevented the continuance of the Boeotian navy. It is unclear what became of all of the triremes that remained, but without maintenance they would quickly have become unseaworthy.

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1084 As Ruzicka (1998), 60-69, argues.
1085 E.g. Diodorus’ overview of the Satrap’s revolt (Diod. 15. 90 1-4). See Briant (2002), 656-675.
1086 Buckler (1980a), 174.
Chapter 10

The Collapse of the Alliance and the Campaign to Mantinea

364-362 B.C.

*The Death of Pelopidas and the Destruction of Orchomenus*

When Epameinondas returned home from his naval voyage he would have become privy to much grave news. Earlier in the year, Alexander of Pherae had redoubled his efforts to conquer Thessaly and had occupied Phthiotic Achaea and Magnesia. In response the Thessalian League requested help from the Boeotians, asking in particular that Pelopidas lead the force. It is probable that Pelopidas, the propagator of the league, argued in favour of this and the assembly agreed to send a force of 7,000 hoplites. It is plausible that the northern Aegean campaigns of Timotheus also influenced the assembly’s decision to reassert their influence in the north, particularly as they had previously supported Alexander against Thebes. Unfortunately, just before the army set off, on July 13 364,\(^\text{1087}\) a solar eclipse occurred, which the seers interpreted to be an ill omen for the army; as a result, it refused to go. Ignoring the warnings, Pelopidas took 300 mercenary cavalry and whatever Boeotians would volunteer before setting out for Thessaly. He joined an allied Thessalian force at Pharsalus before marching out to engage the enemy. Nearby, at the ridge of Bekidhes, Pelopidas fought against Alexander of Pherae at the Battle of Cynoscephalae. Though the engagement is considered a tactical masterpiece on Pelopidas’ half, the great Theban general was slain while attempting to prevent Alexander’s forces from regrouping. None were more distraught at his death (except maybe his wife and children) than the Thessalians who held a funeral of epic proportions alongside commissioning a bronze statue to be sculpted by

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\(^{1087}\) Plutarch states that Thebes was covered in darkness during the daytime; however, if the eclipse in question can be identified with the one on 13 July 364, the sun would have only been about three quarters obscured, see Chambers (2018), 85. Information on ancient eclipses can be obtained from https://eclipse.gsfc.nasa.gov.
Lyssipus at Delphi. The loss of Pelopidas was a grave one for the returning general. He had clearly been Epameinodas’ great friend and most important political ally. We are given the impression quite evidently that Pelopidas was held in high esteem by the people of Thebes: apparently more so than Epameinondas. Without his companion, the one remaining great Theban leader would probably now face tougher opposition from the assembly, thus making his plight for an aggressive foreign policy all the more desperate. However, in retaliation, the assembly sent a force of 7,000 hoplites and 700 cavalry, which defeated Alexander, made him into a subject-ally and forced him to relinquish control of Magnesia and Phthiotic Achaea (Plut. Pel. 35. 2-3).

Meanwhile, probably sometime after Pelopidas had left for Thessaly (or even after his death), some Theban exiles bid 300 Orchomenian horsemen, who had been regularly going to Thebes for review under arms, to join them in a conspiracy with the intention of replacing the government with an oligarchy. However, the exiles changed their minds seemingly at the last moment and betrayed the Orchomenians to the boeotarchs. The horsemen were arrested and executed, following which the assembly decreed that the city of Orchomenus be razed to the ground with the execution of its citizenry and enslavement of the women and children. The decision was rash and brutal but there stood a longstanding enmity between Thebes and Orchomenus and the Thebans may have genuinely been fearful of the dangers that a revolt from that city could entail. While the inhabitants were all undoubtedly innocent the conspirators themselves may have been concerned that the Boeotian Confederacy was becoming more of a radical democracy, like Athens, particularly with the recent naval activity. Both Plutarch and Pausanias are at pains to assert that neither Epameinondas or Pelopidas (in Plutarch) were present for this atrocity. Indeed, the timing would fit the absence of both men. Epameinondas, in particular, surely would have been horrified over what had happened, since he vehemently opposed the killing of his fellow countrymen. Though Orchomenus had been a traditional enemy of Thebes, Epameinondas


\[1089\] On the second Theban expedition to Thessaly in 364 see Westlake (1935), 150-152; Sordi (1958), 219-220; Buckler (1980a), 181-182; Roy (1994), 202-203; Georgiadou (1997), 222-223.

\[1090\] On the destruction of Orchomenus see Buckler (1980a), 182-184.

\[1091\] Cawkwell (1972), 268 n. 1, 272 n. 1.
felt kinship with his fellow Boeotians. We must remember that, back in 370, the assembly had previously charged him with subduing and reducing Orchomenus. Epameinondas managed to secure the city’s safety by, instead, reducing its political power; however, this clearly did not satisfy many of the Thebans who viewed the Orchomenians with distrust. The more recent conspiracy gave them the excuse they needed to remove the city entirely. I would, as a result, tend to agree with our ancient writers’ assessments of the Theban general. The incident also implies that the policies of Epameinondas and Pelopidas did not completely dominate the federal council at this time.

The Elean-Arcadian War and the Collapse of the Arcadian League 365-362 B.C.

While matters in Boeotia and Thessaly had more or less stabilized, the situation in the Peloponnesus had grown potentially very dangerous for the Boeotian federation. The precarious system of alliances that Epameinondas had established with Argos, Arcadia, Messene and Elis, with the purpose of shutting in the Spartans, had properly fragmented when, in 365, the Eleans attacked the Arcadian controlled city of Lasium. As a result, the Arcadians, with some Athenian assistance, invaded the territory of Elis, occupying several cities including Pylos and Olympia, which was given to the Pisatans who claimed an ancient entitlement over the sacred city. In response, the desperate Eleans, in outright contravention of the Boeotian-Peloponnesian League, concluded an alliance with the Spartans, who set out in full force to Arcadia. With Archidamus at the helm they occupied the city of Cromnus, which lay on the road between Messene and Megalopolis, before leaving three lochoi, out of 12, and returning home. The Arcadians, having received some reinforcements from Argos and Boeotia, sent their eparitoi to take back the city. This they achieved after some difficulty and successfully captured over 100 Perioci and Spartiates. The prisoners were divided up between the allies (Xen. Hell. 7. 4. 12-27; Diod. 15. 77. 1-4).

1093 With a few detractors it is generally thought that, while Pisatis may refer to the territory around Olympia on the Alpheios River, there did not exist an independent polis or ethnic group, as distinct from the Eleans as a whole until this period. See Bourke (2018), 53-68.
In the following year (364), while the Pisatans and Arcadians were administering the Olympic games, the Eleans made an attack just as the wrestling portion of the pentathlon was about to begin. Fighting took place in the sacred precinct and, while the Eleans had some success, the Arcadian force managed to drive the enemy off, following which they fortified the area with wooden stockades (Xen. Hell. 7. 4. 28-32). Because of the mounting expense of funding the 5,000 hoplites of the eparitoi, magistrates of the Arcadians began to exact funds from the sacred treasury at Olympia. Although the money was officially taken as a loan, by 363, the Mantineans, independent of the Arcadian federal assembly, voted to cease from this offence to the god. The magistrates of the league became concerned and sent the eparitoi to arrest the officials in Mantinea. Once the army arrived, however, the city shut its gates, barring it from entry. As a result of this the assembly of the myrioi began to disapprove of the sacred treasure appropriation and quickly voted to put an end to it (Xen. Hell. 7. 4. 33-34; Diod. 15. 82. 1-2).  

This meant that the soldiers of the eparitoi had to be replaced with wealthy aristocrats and their friends, which placed a great deal of Arcadian power in the hands of those with oligarchic predispositions. Those magistrates, probably those more democratically inclined, who had been involved in dealing with the Olympic treasury, were now in a rather tricky predicament: if they were made to account for their dealings they could be condemned. Because of this they appealed to the Thebans for support, who, in turn, prepared to send an army. But the Arcadian assembly sent word to Thebes, telling them not to come with their army unless first requested by the assembly. The oligarchs then concluded peace with Elis after abandoning the Elean cities and leaving the Pisatians to their own device. Thus ended the war that had begun two years earlier between Arcadia and Elis; however, the peace by no means settled the political turmoil in the Arcadian League. Those of the Arcadians (Tegeans in particular) that were still fearful of being brought to account for their actions, along with a Theban officer at the helm of 300 hoplites, entered Tegea and arrested a number of the aristocrats. The Mantineans reacted to this by occupying the passes to their

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1094 Xenophon states that it was Tegean magistrates that utilized the sacred funds, whereas Diodorus says that it was Mantineans. Perhaps it is prudent to assume that there is truth in both statements and conclude that either side attempted to lay blame on the other, which would explain our conflicting accounts. On the political situation in Arcadia at this time see Roy (1971a), 584-588.
1095 On the Elean-Arcadian War see Buckler (2003), 342-344; Bourke (2018), 191-196.
1096 Probably a lochagos, see Buckler (1980a), 205, 314 n. 38.
territory and sent word to the Theban, demanding he release the prisoners and that no Arcadian should be imprisoned or executed without trial. The Theban complied and offered a petty excuse that some of the Arcadians were planning to betray Tegea to the Spartans. He was allowed to return home, but the oligarchs sent ambassadors to Thebes demanding that he be condemned for his actions (Xen. _Hell._ 7. 4. 34-39; Diod. 15. 82. 2-3). However, Epameinondas, who was general at this time, cautioned the ambassadors that the Theban officer had acted more correctly when he made the arrest than when he released them. As Xenophon asserts:

“For,” saying to them, “it was for you that we joined the war and without our knowledge made peace; is it then not justifiable for us to accuse you of treason? Well be aware,” he said, “that we shall send an army to Arcadia and, with those that are with us, we shall make war” (Xen. _Hell._ 7. 4. 40). \(^{1097}\)

Genuine or not, this quote that Xenophon puts in the mouth of Epameinondas very suitably reflects Epameinondas’ attitude and it is certainly believable that this would be his response. First, he would have felt obliged to defend the Theban officer, as it was his tendency to prioritize the plight of his own countrymen. Buckler adds that the quote implies the existence of a federal legal clause, which the Arcadian aristocrats had betrayed: they had concluded a peace treaty with Elis without obtaining Theban approval. If such a clause was in fact part of the loose ‘constitution’ of the Boeotian-Peloponnesian alliance then it may have been implemented to prevent any one of the allies abandoning the cause of the others; thus maintaining the alliance. \(^{1098}\) However, the evidence suggests that very few formal clauses existed to safeguard the alliance and it likely that Epameinondas’ arguments were specious. In spite of this, one may ask, since the peace with Elis was surely beneficial, why did Epameinondas and the Thebans not just simply side with the aristocrats? From the point of view of the assembly, the age-old story of oligarchs versus democrats could be a factor, i.e. they were compelled to support the democratic faction of the Arcadian League. Epameinondas, on the other hand, was less motivated by political ideology: he was probably more concerned by the continued fragmentation of the alliance and the allies’ increasingly

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\(^{1097}\) τὸ γὰρ ἡμῶν δι᾽ ἡμᾶς εἰς πόλεμον καταστάντων ἡμῶν ἀνευ τῆς ἡμετέρας γνώμης εἰρήνην ποιεῖσθαι πός οὖκ ἄν δικαίως προδόσαι τις ἡμῶν τοῦτο κατηγοροίη; εῦ δ’ ἵστε, ἢρη, ὅτι ἡμεῖς καὶ στρατευόμεθα εἰς τὴν Ἀρκαδίαν καὶ σὺν τοῖς τὰ ἡμέτερα φρονοῦσι πολεμήσομεν.

\(^{1098}\) Buckler (1980a), 206.
drastic activities. Arcadia had made an alliance with Athens and fallen into internal *stasis*; in addition, Elis had made war on Arcadia and formed an alliance with Sparta. The Boeotian-Peloponnesian alliance was about to completely collapse and this was the opportunity for Epameinondas, with his characteristic aggressive policy, to reassert Theban influence in the Peloponnesus.

*The Fourth Invasion of the Peloponnesus: The Road to Mantinea*

Probably sometime early in the summer of 362 the Boeotian army once again mobilized for its fourth and final campaign in the Peloponnesus. Envoys were also sent to their allies requesting reinforcements. They had positive returns from the Euboeans, Aenianians, Malians, Locrians, and, from Thessaly, soldiers sent by Alexander of Pherae and Achaeans from Achaean Phthiotis.\(^{1099}\) An envoy had apparently been sent to the Phocians but they refused on the grounds that their alliance with Thebes was only defensive. The army would also be bolstered by allies from the Peloponnesus including the Messenians, Argives, Sicyonians and, of the Arcadians, the Tegeans, Megalopolitans, Aseans and the Pallantians (Xen. *Hell*. 7. 5. 4-5; Diod. 15. 84. 4, 85. 2). With his force from central Greece fully mustered, Epameinondas set forth for the Isthmus. Because of the neutral status of Corinth and Megara there was no attempt to prevent the army’s entry into the Peloponnesus. As usual, they arrived at Nemea, their regular rendezvous point, where they undoubtedly met many of their Peloponnesian allies (Xen. *Hell*. 7. 5. 6). All in all, the call to arms was an absolute success, as Diodorus states that they managed to gather a force of more than 30,000 hoplites (including some light arms) and some 3,000 cavalry (Diod. 15. 84. 4).

Meanwhile the Arcadians, who were led by Mantinea, being fearful that the Thebans intended on weakening the cities of the Peloponnesus in order to enslave them,\(^ {1100}\) sent for help for the upcoming campaign from the Achaeans, Spartans, Eleans and also from the

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1099 The Achaeans mentioned by Diodorus are probably those of Phthiotis in Thessaly, since the Peloponnesian Achaeans were on the side of the Mantineans and had reason to zealously oppose the Thebans, see Sherman (1952), 187 n. 3; Hamilton (1991), 246 n. 102.

1100 Westlake (1975), 29.
Athenians (Xen. *Hell.* 7. 5. 1, 3; Diod. 15. 84. 4). In this newly fledged military alliance, it was decided that command would be given to whichever territory was the seat of battle (Xen. *Hell.* 7. 5. 3). As these forces began to assemble the Boeotian federal army arrived at Nemea where they may have been informed that a large force of Athenian soldiers was preparing to journey to the Peloponnesus as well. Epameinondas reasoned that, if he could prevent the Athenians from joining the rest of their allies, they would hopefully give up on the endeavour and return home. This would have given him an overwhelming numerical superiority over the combined opposing force. However, Athens, perhaps expecting some such ploy, decided to prepare for the army to be transported by sea (Xen. *Hell.* 7. 5. 6-7).\textsuperscript{1101} Although Epameinondas probably had to wait in Nemea at least a couple of days for all of the allies to assemble, his wasteful lingering may have afforded the enemy the same convenience\textsuperscript{1102} and, as we shall see, was the first of many setbacks the Theban-led force would undergo.

From Nemea our sources are divergent on what happened next. Xenophon states that Epameinondas went to Tegea and fortified himself within the city. He commends the Theban for doing so since the army was safe and concealed within the walls and could easily be provisioned. The Theban also hoped that more cities would come to his side, but it appears that none did. More pertinent was his anticipation of being attacked at Tegea, rather than attack the enemy in their defensible position at Mantinea. Epameinondas remained at Tegea for some time until he caught word of the approach of the Spartan army under Agesilaus (now 82),\textsuperscript{1103} which had reached the town of Pellana in the northern reaches of Laconia.\textsuperscript{1104} As a result the Theban general decided to march his troops down to Sparta (Xen. *Hell.* 7. 5. 7-9). Diodorus, on the other hand states that, when the Boeotian federal army arrived in the Peloponnesus, the Spartan force was already in Arcadia ravaging the territory of Tegea. At

\textsuperscript{1101} Buckler (1980a), 208, 209, thinks that this was an Athenian ruse. This is possible, since the sources indicate that they travelled by land. However, Hamilton (1991), 246, accepts a sea voyage and assumes that the Athenians sailed to the port of Gytheum. This is perhaps not out of the question, see below, 304-305. Kromayer (1903), 32, 36 n. 2, also suggests that the Athenians intended to sail to Laconia and rendezvous with the Spartans, before changing their mind when Epameinondas marched toward Sparta.

\textsuperscript{1102} See Kromayer (1903), 34, for a similar sentiment.

\textsuperscript{1103} Plut. *Ages.* 40.2; Cartledge (1987), 235-236.

\textsuperscript{1104} Kromayer (1903), 35-36, argues that Epameinondas must have had scouts on the heights of Skyritida, south of Pardali or near Kollines, where the valley down to Pellana can be observed. The nature of the Theban's information is, however, unknowable, but it is probable that he sent dozens of scouts in all directions to observe the enemy. Either way, like with Athens before, the situation is a testament to his good intelligence.
that point, the order to march south was made (Diod. 15. 82. 5-6). However, both Plutarch and Polybius indicate that Epameinondas was in Tegea when he heard that Agesilaus was heading for Mantinea and thus decided to attack Sparta (Plut. Ages. 34. 3; Polyb. 9. 8. 2-3). Because of this, Xenophon’s account is the preferred one. It is possible, however, that the assertion in Diodorus that the Spartans were at Tegea is not a mistake. Indeed, Xenophon, while remarking on Epameinondas’ decision to occupy Tegea, states that an enemy force was somewhere in view of the city and could be seen by Epameinondas himself (Xen. Hell. 7. 5. 8). This seems to confirm Diodorus’ statement that a force of enemy soldiers was within the vicinity of Tegea, which would provide ample explanation for why Epameinondas remained in the city for a period of time without attempting a more aggressive strategy.

Upon learning that Agesilaus was on the move with the Spartan army, Epameinondas made the decision to bypass the enemy and head into Laconia, making an attack against the city of Sparta itself. The city was largely undefended and would be an easy target, particularly if it was caught by surprise. Occupying Sparta would compel Agesilaus to return without joining his allies where he would be at a heavy disadvantage against Epameinondas’ massive force. It is conceivable that the Theban general wished to force the Spartans into concluding a settlement with them. Not only would this have been a great embarrassment to the Spartans, if the city was taken, they could have been removed as a threat in the upcoming fight against Mantinea. The plan was a daring one, but militarily sound if successful.

Having left about half of the army in Tegea (Just. 6. 7. 4), probably mostly Boeotian hoplites, along with the Boeotian and Thessalian cavalry, Epameinondas ordered his men to have an early dinner and took the hardiest of his troops, probably mostly Boeotian, southward on a forced march overnight to Sparta. Epameinondas must have noted that

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1105 See Stylianou (1998), 508, who thinks that either Diodorus misunderstood the passage in Ephorus or that the latter added it in addition to his use of Callisthenes.

1106 Cf. Buckler (1980a), 208-209, who reasons that Epameinondas intended on compelling the Spartans into a pitched battle; whereas Westlake (1975), 31-32, argues that the intention was to prevent one. See also Roisman (2017), 324.

1107 See Buckler (1980a), 209, though his contention that the infantry consisted only of Boeotian soldiers is debatable since Justin says that 15,000 were sent: this figure is far too big.

1108 Diod. 15. 82. 6; Plut. Ages. 34. 3; De Gloria 2/Mor 346b-c; Polyb. 9. 8. 3; Front. Strat. 3. 11. 5; Just. 6. 7. 2; Polyaen. 2. 3. 10. Frontinus states that Epameinondas ordered the men to make campfires at night to
Agesilaus, who was avoiding the direct route to Mantinea (through Tegea), was taking the more circuitous path through Pellana and Asea, which meant that he could reach Sparta quickly and without being observed by the Spartans. In a further attempt to maintain the secrecy of the endeavour he also spread false information, which conveyed that he was leaving Tegea in order to gain a favourable position against the enemy in Mantinea (Polyb. 9. 8. 3). Unlike the last invasion of Laconia, over seven years before, this time Epameinondas must have genuinely held high hopes of taking the city of Sparta. In 370/69 he gave up due to expediency and because he had other plans. On this occasion, the result would be a gross embarrassment for the Spartans and could determine the entire outcome of the war, particularly since Thebes’ Peloponnesian enemies would probably not maintain their unity in the face of a major Spartan defeat. This was surely not lost upon the general as he marched his crack troops southward for some 50 kilometres in a single night, along mountainous terrain. The fact that these soldiers could manage the difficult and long journey and still be battle ready on their arrival at Sparta is a testament to how well trained and experienced the Boeotian army had become. We have no reason to doubt that Epameinondas deserves much credit for this feat.

The success of the attack, however, was almost wholly dependent upon its concealment and unfortunately for the invaders, despite Epameinondas’ cautions, the plan was betrayed to Agesilaus by an informant, who was probably, as Callisthenes states, a deserter from Thespiae named Euthynus. On this matter the sources do not agree: Xenophon states that the informant was a Cretan while Plutarch’s testimonial of Callisthenes says he was a Thespian. The answer to the problem may lie in Diodorus’ account in which he asserts that Agesilaus merely guessed what Epameinondas was attempting and thus sent out

give the impression that the army remained at Tegea. He would then use the same tactic to escape from Spartan territory on the following day, see below. However, since the army was encamped within the walls of Tegea such a *strategem* would be unnecessary since it could not be observed by enemy scouts. It is possible that Frontinus, or his source, was confused by the early dinner, thinking that this meant that many fires were lit.

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1109 Cary (1933), 100.
1110 Kromayer (1903), 39-40, further suggests that Epameinondas may have intended on freeing the remaining Helots and Perioeci and thereby establishing something similar to the state of Messene in replacement of Sparta. While this is an attractive theory it is doubtful that the Theban general had thought that far ahead since the attack was decided on the spur of the moment.
1111 Kromayer (1903), 38.
1112 Callisthenes *FGrH* 124 F26 = Plut. *Ages*. 34. 4; Xen. *Hell*. 7. 5. 10; Diod. 15. 84. 6; cf. Polyb. 9. 8. 6; Polyain. 2. 3. 10. See Stylianou (1998), 508-509. On Euthynus, see Rzepka *BNJ* 124 F26.
Cretans to warn Sparta. We may speculate that the confusion can be accounted for if the informant was indeed a Thespian, but the messengers sent out were Cretan. Stylianou adds that the informant can only have known the direction the Boeotian force went and that Agesilaus guessed what Epameinondas was attempting. This explains Diodorus’ statement that Agesilaus was the more cunning general on this occasion (Diod. 15. 83. 1).

The Spartan king quickly sent word back home and wheeled his own force around to assist in the defence of his city. At this point, the sources on the attack on Sparta diverge considerably and, although Xenophon’s account is usually preferred over the rest, his inherent biases in favour of Sparta and against Thebes denote that we ought to proceed with some caution. The first issue that arises is in identifying the position of the Spartan army. As stated above, Xenophon says that Epameinondas heard that Agesilaus was in Pellana. Conversely Polybius says that Agesilaus was in Mantinea when he heard what the Theban was doing (Polyb. 9. 8. 6). Xenophon is undoubtedly correct in this case since it would have been impossible for Agesilaus to have arrived at Sparta from Mantinea (some 75 kilometres) before or even after the Boeotian attack began. From Pellana to Sparta it is a journey of just over 18 kilometres. If Agesilaus was there when he heard the news it is plausible that his army arrived at Sparta before the Boeotians.

The march from Tegea to Sparta would have taken at least 10 hours to complete and, if the Boeotians arrived at around eight or nine in the morning as has been estimated, they would have had to leave by 10 or 11 the previous night. 10 o’clock, or slightly later may be a good estimate since, during the middle of the year, it does not become fully dark until after 9.30 and closer to 11 in the middle of summer. The march from Pellana to Sparta would have taken at least four hours and, since we must add at least a couple of hours for the city to prepare its defence, Agesilaus must have left Pellana by two or three in the morning. In order to reach Pellana in time, the message from Tegea must have been sent by horse since it is nearly 40 kilometres distance. The rider would have taken a couple of hours because the

1114 Kromayer (1903), 38; Buckler (1980a), 210. This estimate is fairly sound if we can trust Polybius’ statement that the Boeotians arrived in Sparta on the third hour of daylight, since it becomes noticeably light in that part of the world, during the middle months of the year, between five and six in the morning.
1115 For the daylight hours throughout the year in Greece, see http://www.timeanddate.com/sun/greece.
mountainous terrain and darkness surely prevented top speed. This means that the rider must have left Tegea by midnight or one in the morning. Allowing that Agesilaus could have arrived at Sparta another hour or two earlier, the timing for the messenger to Pellana and Agesilaus’ march south works out rather well with Epameinondas’ night march.

Out of the 12 Spartan lochoi, three had gone to Arcadia, along with a mercenary force and all of the cavalry, thus leaving nine (Xen. *Hell.* 7. 5. 10).\(^{1116}\) Roisman assumes that the three lochoi, along with mercenaries and cavalry, were present with Agesilaus but were sent on to Mantinea while the rest returned to Sparta. This is certainly plausible but it is equally possible that this force had already been sent northward, which may explain Diodorus’ statement that the Spartans had been ravaging the territory of Tegea\(^{1117}\) and it may also clarify why Polybius thought Agesilaus was in Mantinea.\(^{1118}\) With nine lochoi, this would mean that the city had, at its defence, an army of up to 5,640 men at its highest, though an estimate closer to 3,000 is probably more appropriate for the period.\(^{1119}\) While this amount falls far short of the number Agesilaus had previously had to defend the city in 370/69, Epameinondas’ present army was also much smaller than on that occasion. Because of this, with fair warning the Spartans had sufficient manpower to establish a strong defence.

As the Boeotians were pushing their way, in the night, along the rugged terrain, the Spartans in Pellana began their own rapid journey. The sources provide divergent information about when the Spartan army arrived at the city. Xenophon states that Agesilaus arrived at Sparta before Epameinondas and notes that the city had very few men to do this with since some of the army were in Arcadia (Xen. *Hell.* 7. 5. 10). Here Xenophon rather curiously contradicts himself because, as stated above, he implies that nine of the 12 lochoi were present, which, along with the old men and youths, amounted to a substantial defensive force. It is then generally assumed that this force came with Agesilaus to the defence of the city. Diodorus and Plutarch both state that Agesilaus sent on a message to the people in Sparta to

\(^{1116}\) Roisman (2017), 325.
\(^{1117}\) See above, 288.
\(^{1118}\) Underhill (1900), 303.
\(^{1119}\) The size of a Spartan lochos is not certain: at its highest, it was known to contain 640 men per lochos, but by this time, it was liable to have been somewhat less. See Lazenby (1985), 5-10.
guard the city, adding that he would return swiftly (Plut. Ages. 34. 4; Diod. 15. 82. 6). Justin and Polybius both indicate that Agesilaus arrived with his army after the attack had already begun (Polyb. 9. 8. 6; Just. 6. 7. 9). If the remaining people of Sparta managed to withstand the Boeotians for a time before the arrival of Agesilaus and the nine lochoi, it is difficult to believe that Xenophon, who was undoubtedly privy to first-hand information on the attack, would fail to record this. We can therefore discount the statements of Justin and Polybius. Plutarch and Diodorus, on the other hand, may offer some insight. Xenophon’s narrative jumps from Agesilaus’ discovery of the attack to his arrival in Sparta before the enemy. However, Plutarch and Diodorus say that a rider was sent ahead of the army to warn the city. If this is true, then it is manifest that the defence preparations began at this moment and not when the king arrived. Agesilaus surely sent instructions to make the necessary arrangements, which would have been on the way to completion by the time he arrived. Accepting this would allow for a later march back from Pellana to Sparta by a couple of hours.

Once the Spartans that remained at home received the news of the impending attack, they prepared their defence under the instructions of Agesilaus. They began, according to Xenophon, by placing soldiers at particular points and stationing old men and youths on the rooftops in order to pelt the attackers (Xen. Hell. 7. 5. 10-11). Diodorus substantially confirms this action, adding that the soldiers were placed at the city’s entrance and along difficult terrain. Plutarch and Polyaeonus confirm that Agesilaus organized the defence and Aeneas Tacticus provides us with some very specific information: he tells us that, in preparation of the defence, the Spartans began filling baskets with stones from houses, fences and walls, along with the bronze tripods from the temples, which they used to block up the entrances and passages of the city (Aen. Tact. 2. 2). The defence was apparently done very similarly to the attack in 370/69, but probably with even more haste since the city can only have had a few hours to prepare. We may suppose that, since the last attack, the

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1120 Diodorus states that the Spartan king was named Agis. This is probably a copyist error as it is doubtful that Diodorus would make such an egregious mistake himself. See Stylianou (1998), 508.
1121 Plut. Ages. 34. 4-5; Apo. Lac. 2.74/214c; Polyaeon. 2. 3. 11.
1122 See above, 122-134.
1123 On the defensive dispositions at Sparta, see Buckler (1980a), 210; Roisman (2017), 325.
Spartans were much more wary of such an occurrence and would therefore be more efficient in their organization.

Overnight the Boeotian army must have taken the track that went along Caryae and Sellasia, which Epameinondas had before made use of. By morning they had navigated the mountains to the north of Sparta and entered into the Eurotas River valley. On arriving within the vicinity of Sparta we are told three different things about the Boeotian dispositions before the battle. Xenophon says that Epameinondas did not bring his troops up to where they would have to fight the Spartans on an even plain and be pelted by those on the rooftops, or where the few defenders would have an advantage over the many. Instead, he says, rather vaguely, that the Boeotians took the position from which Epameinondas thought they would have an advantage, i.e. they would descend upon the city as opposed to ascending. Xenophon then says in his narrative of the fighting that Archidamus would cross a certain obstacle and march uphill against the enemy (Xen. Hell. 7. 5. 11-12). Diodorus adds that, before the attack, Epameinondas divided his army into several columns with the intention of attacking multiple areas at once (Diod. 15. 83. 4). Finally, Plutarch also says that, prior to the attack, the invaders crossed the Eurotas (Plut. Ages. 34. 4).

Xenophon’s imprecision, in this case, has caused a substantial amount of confusion. Westlake, in particular, notes that Xenophon, in spite of an undoubted knowledge of the area, does not make any specific references to landmarks that could indicate the site of the battle. Nor does he tell us exactly what the obstacle was that Archidamus crossed. It seems clear that the Boeotians occupied some higher ground in order to descend upon the city; however, there is more than one option as to where he is referring. On initial observation of the area’s topography the obvious position would be on the hill to the northwest of the acropolis where the General Hospital of Laconia now lies. Buckler agrees to this as a possibility but argues in favour of the higher ground on the eastern bank of the Eurotas since the river is surely the obstacle that Archidamus crossed and that, during his previous invasion, Epameinondas did

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1125 Westlake (1975), 32-33. See also Breitenbach (1876), 243; Underhill (1900), 303-304.
indeed struggle to ford it. However, these arguments are hardly definitive and Roisman has more recently concluded that either possibility is plausible.

Much of the problem, it seems, arises from the elusive nature of the topography of the city of Sparta. While the acropolis is easily identifiable, the location and limits of the agora and urban areas are not and have not been identified conclusively. The most probable area is the plateau to the east of the acropolis, which spans some 200 metres toward the Eurotas. This would, as Waywell states, fit well with Pausanias who describes the agora first after crossing the Eurotas bridge (Paus. 3. 11). This may well have been the ancient bridge just north of the modern one, the remains of which were observed by nineteenth century travellers to the area. In addition to this, Polybius specifically states that the Boeotian force successfully broke into the agora and the area of the city that slopes towards the river (Polyb. 9. 8. 5). If this report can be trusted it most certainly favours an attack from the east, making the eastern bank of the river the most probable candidate for the so-called higher ground.

Accepting this assertion thus allows for a vivid reconstruction of the attack: having brought the army along the road east of the Eurotas, Epameinondas probably passed the ancient bridge, which may have been under guard and was certainly impractical to cross with the entire army while hostile forces were near. Somewhere about this point the Theban general realized that his ploy for secrecy had failed; however, he was not going to march all this way without at least making an attempt upon the city. He then began to line his men up into several columns along the high ground on the eastern bank of the Eurotas. I would suggest the army was facing the eastern side of the acropolis around the area of, or not much further south than, the Eurotas Altar, which lies about 120 metres eastward of the modern bridge. The Boeotians were then given the order to cross the river after which they attempted to storm the city. Here, Xenophon and Plutarch provide little information about the overall

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1126 Buckler (1980a), 315-316 n. 49; Buckler (2003), 346 n. 55. Kromayer (1903), 41, appears to agree with this when he states that the Thebans seized the eastern districts of the city.
1127 Roisman (2017), 325. Westlake (1975), 33 n. 28, thinks that Xenophon merely assumed that Epameinondas attacked from higher ground. Underhill (1900), 304, surmises that Xenophon’s use of κατέβαινε could refer to any hillock.
1129 Crosby (1898), 338; Frazer (1898c), 325.
1130 Not to mention the fact that it also implies that the agora did indeed lie to the east of the acropolis.
nature of the battle; instead, they are more interested in the personal valour of specific soldiers. We are thus more reliant on Diodorus and Polybius, at least for the first stage of the attack. Diodorus states that the Boeotians attacked from every side (Diod. 15. 83. 4). This is an undoubted exaggeration but fits with his previous statement that the army was divided up. As Epameinondas would not have wanted to attack at one point, thus allowing the Spartans to concentrate their defence, it was prudent to divide up the force into several smaller units and attack at different points. One could imagine a division of some five groups of 3,000 soldiers, or even as small as 15 groups of 1,000 men, plus cavalry either functioning as its own unit or supplementing each divided unit of infantry. The attack was then aimed at several different entry points to the city, which had, however, been blockaded by the Spartans. Epameinondas chose to aim for the area of the agora where the streets were more open and therefore less vulnerable to missile attack from the rooftops.

Aeneas Tacticus and Plutarch seem to imply that the invaders did not manage to actually enter the city itself (Aen. Tact. 2. 2; Plut. Apo. Lac. 2.74/761d); whereas, Polybius says that they went all the way to the agora. The issue here is easy enough to solve when one understands the full scale of the situation. If the Boeotian force did number 15,000 soldiers and were divided into a number of units it is conceivable, given the nature of the defences, that several of the units did indeed fail to enter the city; however, considering the divergence in the sources, it is also easily believable that several of the units, managed to break into the city itself, at least temporarily.

Amidst this chaotic affair the stories of Xenophon and Callisthenes thus find context. The former states that Archidamus, with 100 Spartiates, attacked the invaders by crossing an obstacle (the Eurotas) and advancing uphill against them. The assault caused the opponents to flee, killing many; however, in their pursuit many Spartans were, in turn, slain. Archidamus apparently erected a trophy to celebrate this victory and allowed the enemy to gather their fallen (Xen. Hell. 7. 5. 12-13). While a great story of heroics, we might suspect a fair amount of hyperbole from the Spartophile. Plutarch, who had Xenophon at his

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1131 Plutarch says that it was Agesilaus who erected the trophy (Plut. Ages. 34. 5). This was probably what was said in Callisthenes who may simply have assumed this since it was Agesilaus who organized the defence. In either case both father and son undoubtedly received much praise for their efforts.
disposal, offers slightly different information, which surely came from Callisthenes. He reports that Archidamus ran to and fro to the endangered points (τὰ θλιβόμενα) in the city (Plut. Ages. 34. 6). This seems to indicate that Archidamus and his crack troops fought at a number of different areas of the city, undoubtedly helping to prevent some of the Boeotian units from properly entering. Combining this with Xenophon it is apparent that, at some point, Archidamus managed to drive one of these units all the way back across the Eurotas but was not likely to have pushed much further and would have had to back off once the Boeotians reorganized themselves into a defensive position. This story seems also to be reflected in Justin (though heavily distorted) who says that 100 old men fought off all 15,000 of the enemy (Just. 6. 7. 3-7). With Xenophon alone it is possible to see how such a tradition may have propagated: he gives the impression that Archidamus deserved credit for chasing off the entire army; but, with a unit of 100 men, this is practically impossible and it makes much more sense to see his account as accurate, yet only narrating a small portion of the overall assault. Xenophon, who would surely have had access to first-hand information, was not interested in providing an account that betrayed the success of the Boeotians entering the city; rather, he wanted to emphasize the brilliance of Agesilaus and Archidamus, who were his own benefactors. Thus Archidamus’ victory was a minor one and probably does not fully explain why the attack failed overall.

We find further anecdotal information from Plutarch, probably using Callisthenes, who says that Isidas, the son of Phoebidas, had entered battle in the nude since he had just covered himself in oil. With sword and spear he leapt across the rooftops before throwing himself into the enemy. Miraculously he struck down many a foe without himself receiving a single blow. Apparently the ephors would later adorn him with a garland before fining him 1,000 drachmas for not wearing armour (Plut. Ages. 34. 6-7). Aelian adds that Isidas was not old enough to fight as a hoplite, which added to the fine (Ael. Var. Hist. 6. 3). This fits with Callisthenes’ report that he was on the rooftops, with the other young and old men. While the story adds little to our understanding of the attack it does reflect the desperation of the inhabitants of Sparta and it seems that many of those within the city did not have much time to prepare for the battle. We may also wonder why Xenophon did not include this story since, while preferring to glorify Archidamus, he would surely have found merit in including the story of Isidas. We can only speculate on many of the details, but none should deny the skill
and resilience of the defenders for once again saving the city against, what may have seemed like, overwhelming odds.

Though part of the city was taken, the fighting was fierce and the body count was amounting. Eventually Epameinondas sounded the signal to withdraw. Exactly what triggered this is far from unanimous. As well as Archidamus’ attack, Xenophon states that Epameinondas was concerned that the Arcadians (Mantineans) would send reinforcements to Sparta and it was therefore best to withdraw (Xen. Hell. 7. 5. 14). Diodorus reports that both reinforcements and the onset of night were what caused the Boeotian force to leave (Diod. 15. 83. 5). In his De Gloria Atheniensium, Plutarch also states that the Boeotians retired because of the arrival of reinforcements. Similarly, Polybius is under the impression that the Spartan army’s appearance forced the Boeotians to call off the siege (Plut. De Gloria 346c; Polyb. 9. 8. 6). Justin adds that two unnamed generals (on the Boeotian side) were killed before Agesilaus was nearing the city and the attackers were forced to retreat (Just. 7. 6. 8-9). Thus, we have four different sources that seem to think that reinforcements arrived well into the attack. Plutarch, Frontinus and Polyaenus also state that the invaders left under the cover of night. Though these are substantial differences on the nature of the attack, as follows, when examining the similarities, much is reconcilable.

The attack would not plausibly have taken the entire day, especially since the troops must have been exhausted and the losses on both sides would have been catastrophic. It has therefore been estimated that the attack was called off around late morning or early afternoon. It is also doubtful that Agesilaus arrived after the battle had started since Xenophon, Plutarch and Diodorus all agree that he arrived earlier. However, we can probably trust Xenophon when he says that the Mantineans were on their way. The approach of the Spartan allies may have aroused the confusion that Agesilaus arrived late, since it is quite possible that the Spartan force that was already in Mantinea was present with the reinforcements. It has also led to the confusion that it was the arrival of the reinforcements,

1132 Plut. De Gloria 2/346c; Front. 3. 11. 5; Polyaen. 2. 3. 10.
1133 Kromayer (1903), 41; Buckler (1980a), 211.
which caused Epameinondas to call off the attack, since it was not possible for them to march from Mantinea to Sparta, a journey of over 75 kilometres, until sometime in the evening.\footnote{See above, 290.}

On the other hand, Diodorus goes on to say that Epameinondas learned of the approach of the Mantineans from Spartan captives and then proceeded to withdraw his men. They camped a short distance from the city, probably on a defensible position, and prepared dinner.\footnote{Diod. 15. 84. 1: δειπνοποιεῖσθαι.} Polybius, substantially agreeing with Diodorus, perhaps more correctly states that they prepared breakfast and took time to rest after the siege.\footnote{Polyb. 9. 8. 7: ἀριστοποιησάμενος.} Plutarch similarly says that the Boeotians gave the impression that they were going to ravage the countryside but instead deceived and lulled their suspicions, i.e. by making camp (Plut. De Gloria 2/346c). Elaborating on this Diodorus and Frontinus tell us that Epameinondas lit watch fires, kept alive throughout the night by a few cavalrymen left behind, in order to appear as if they would remain the night; but when it became dark, the army slipped away (Diod. 15. 84. 1; Front. 3. 11. 5). During the attack, however, some of the soldiers had been forced to flee and shamefully cast away their shields in the panic.\footnote{Perhaps in the fight against Archidamus and the 100 Spartiates.} Epameinondas, being desirous that his men remain confidently battle ready, did not want to trifle with something as petty as that. He therefore ordered all of his men to place their shields with the hypaspists or other attendants thus concealing their action (Polyaen. 2. 3. 10). Once this had been completed, having had a few hours of rest, the army embarked on another forced march back up north, to Tegea.

The question of Epameinondas’ generalship on this occasion has received some debate. In spite of the failure of the endeavour, it has been noted that the attack was not altogether a failure since it managed to keep the Spartan reinforcements from joining with the allied army in Mantinea.\footnote{Contra to Buckler (1980a), 213, who states that Epameinondas “failed to split the enemy's forces”.} As Westlake states, “the Spartans were unlikely to endanger their city again by leaving it almost defenceless”. Thus nine of the 12 lochoi remained in Sparta for the rest of the campaign.\footnote{Anderson (1970), 222; Westlake (1975), 33 n. 30.} However, it may be too far to argue, as Cartledge does, that this was the purpose of the entire attack.\footnote{Cartledge (1987), 235-236.} Indeed, Roisman is more inclined to think that
Epameinondas intended on taking the city and “simply changed his mind” when the fighting got too tough. He adds that the Theban general may not have had the tenacity to take the city, consequently giving up after an initial disappointment. Nevertheless I would argue that these interpretations fail to appreciate exactly what Epameinondas attempted. As stated earlier, he was ultimately hoping that the march south would go unnoticed by Agesilaus until it was too late. If it had, the city could surely not have been able to withstand the attack. The fact that he went for it, in spite of this failure, clearly indicates the intention to take the city. The Callisthenic sources imply that a significant portion of the city was taken, which, if correct, suggests that the siege may have had a fair chance of success. However, the assault was proving to be difficult and the knowledge of the approaching reinforcements, without intelligence on their exact location, would understandably impinge upon Epameinondas’ decision to retire. We cannot therefore assert that Epameinondas purposely employed a diversionary tactic to prevent the Spartans from joining their allies. Nor is it a case of simply changing his mind. The Theban general was, rather, reacting to each situation opportunistically: first, the prospect of a clandestine attack on Sparta presented itself, which, if successful, could have had a tremendous effect on the outcome of the war. During the battle, when word of the Mantineans’ approach was received, Epameinondas was forced to depart. It was at this point that he had to alter his plans, not due to a lack of tenacity, but because the impending arrival of the enemy reinforcements made it impractical to continue the attack.

The army then began another forced march back to Tegea, probably arriving around the same time that they arrived in Sparta the previous morning. Once again, the Boeotians demonstrated their amazing stamina; indeed, the scope of the Boeotian army’s ability is comparable to what would later be achieved by the Macedonians under Alexander the Great. Indeed, Polybius also pegged the achievement as a precursor to Hannibal’s march against Rome (Polyb. 9. 8. 1-2). Kromayer further made the comparison with Caesar’s march for the siege of Gergovia and, more recently, by the march of General von Bülow of the Prussian army on the campaign to the Battle of Waterloo, when on the night of June 16/17, in 1815, he led his men on an overnight march from Liège to Gembloux, a journey of nearly 70

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1141 Roisman (2017), 326. See also Stylianou (1998), 509.
1142 On Alexander’s forced marches among others, see Neumann (1971), 196-198.
kilometres, before marching at least another 17 to Dion-le-Mont during the day.\footnote{Kromayer (1903), 45 n. 2} Epameinondas’ opportunism, however, was not over and, before or during the march to Tegea, he conceived of another plan to thwart the enemy. He reasoned that the soldiers that had gathered in Mantinea were on their way to Sparta and that the city would be defenceless. He also considered that, because it was harvest time, all of the cattle and people of Mantinea would be out in the fields. Thus, on arriving at Tegea, he bid his cavalry force to proceed further north in the hope of once again catching the enemy by surprise (Xen. Hell. 7. 5. 14). It was apparent that, while the cavalry could not take the heavily fortified city, Epameinondas intended on seizing the enemy’s crops, cattle, and any prisoners they could capture. These could have been used as hostages to compel the Mantineans to surrender.\footnote{Roisman (2017), 327.} Stylianou and Westlake both argue that Epameinondas planned on marching his hoplite force to Mantinea after they had had a few hours to rest, but desisted from the idea once the cavalry attack failed.\footnote{Stylianou (1998), 510-511.} This is possible but, if the general wished to provide hoplite support to the cavalry, he could easily have sent the 15,000 fresh soldiers that had been waiting patiently on guard. It is just as plausible, perhaps more so, that the cavalry was supposed to bring the spoils back to the walled city of Tegea.

Stylianou and Westlake’s contention derives from the fact that Diodorus and Polybius seem to imply that the entire army was sent to Mantinea in order to capture the city. (Diod. 15. 84. 2; Polyb. 9. 8. 9). However, Xenophon states that it was just the cavalry that were sent (Xen. Hell. 7. 5. 14). This has caused some dissension amongst historians over whether or not infantry units were sent to support the cavalry. Roisman has recently presumed that a hoplite force was sent with the hope of arriving before the Athenian infantry and made it within seven stadia from the city as they were spotted coming over the mountain.\footnote{Roisman (2017), 328.} This is based on Polybius’ statement that a Theban force had arrived near the city before the Athenians appeared (Polyb. 9. 8. 11). But his use of πρωτοπορείας, meaning an advance guard, should not necessarily refer to an infantry force, but just as easily to cavalry. Indeed, it seems that our Callisthenic sources have failed to recognize that the attack on Mantinea involved only Epameinondas’ cavalry, which has led to this confusion. Though
these accounts provide a number of details that Xenophon does not, the latter may be trusted particularly as two of his sons were liable to be involved in the skirmish.\footnote{Stylianou (1998), 511-512.} We shall therefore proceed under the supposition that, for this attack, only the Boeotian and Thessalian cavalry were sent to Mantinea.

The cavalry proceeded along the road from Tegea to Mantinea, a journey of over 17 kilometres. Polybius tells us that they arrived at midday (Polyb. 9. 8. 9), which would make sense particularly since they would have plausibly taken a couple of hours to rest in Tegea. They proceeded northward, passing into Mantinean territory, which probably began somewhat south of Mt. Mytika. From there they must have gone through a wooded area known as Pelagos (ocean) before reaching the more open plains of farmland. When they arrived in the vicinity of Mantinea, it is apparent that Epameinondas was correct and the people were out harvesting in the fields (Xen. Hell. 7. 5. 15). At this point most of the sources indicate that the Athenians arrived just in time; however, Plutarch says that the cavalry force, having caught the Mantineans by surprise, encircled the walls of the city (Plut. De Gloria 2/346d). This assertion seems to originate from the mistake that Epameinondas sent infantry; otherwise, surrounding the heavily fortified city would achieve very little. It is possible that Plutarch’s ultimate source made this assumption when being informed that the area outside of the city was surrounded as the attackers attempted to round up prisoners and cattle. Perhaps, as an alternative, the cavalry force adopted a wide formation that proceeded towards those fleeing to the city, which may have given the impression that they were attempting to surround the city. Polybius, on the other hand, states that they only made it as far as the Sanctuary of Poseidon, which lay at the southwest foot of Mt. Alesium, some seven stadia (1,295 metres)\footnote{Modern finds place it closer to 1,200 metres, see Pritchett (1969), 50 n. 49.} from the city, when the Athenian horse arrived. If we combine both of these accounts it is apparent that the Boeotian and Thessalian cavalry had already pushed through and ravaged some of the farmland south of the Poseidium and, since we do not know how far north or south the Pelagos stretched, they could have covered well over a kilometre or, at least, several hundred metres.\footnote{See Pritchett (1969), 37-62, for the topography of the area.}
It has been assumed, by Buckler, that soldiers from Achaea and Elis still remained at the city. But there is no indication of this, merely, from Polybius, that some of the Mantineans that were left behind would eventually man the walls (Polyb. 9. 8. 12). Diodorus and Frontinus also state that the city was without protection (Diod. 15. 84. 2; Front. 3. 11. 5). However, we need not take their statements literally since they assumed the city itself was the target. It was, rather, the people in the field who were defenceless. Polybius’ statement suggests that some soldiers were indeed left behind and, it must be admitted, after what had happened to Sparta, it would be verging on stupidity not to at least leave enough to man the battlements in case of a surprise attack. It may then be safe to say that a few soldiers were present within the walls of the city during the attack but were not battle-ready at the time the cavalry appeared entering the field. Whether or not any of these were Achaeans or Eleans, is not clear.

In reaction to the attack the people of Mantinea fell into a panic as they scrambled for the safety of the city walls. Plutarch paints a vivid picture telling us of the people running to and fro, particularly noting their dismay (ἔκπληξις) (Plut. De Gloria 2/346d). Fortunately for them, as the attackers reached the Poseidium, the Athenian cavalry happened to be near at hand. Once again our sources provide contradictory information: while they all agree that the Athenians saved the day, Xenophon indicates that some of the Athenian soldiers were already encamped (καταστρατοπεδευσάμενοι) within the city walls (Xen. Hell. 7. 5. 15). Diodorus says that all 6,000 Athenian soldiers under the command of Hegesileos arrived and Plutarch asserts that both Athenian cavalry and infantry were present, though he agrees that the fighting took place only between the cavalry (Diod. 15. 84. 2; Plut De Gloria 2/346e). Both of these sources, plus Polybius, agree that the Athenians were seen descending a mountain in the distance (Polyb. 9. 8. 11). Naturally we therefore have various interpretations of this: Kromayer prefers Xenophon’s account, saying that the other tradition’s contention that the Athenians appeared at just the right time is “effekthascherei” or sensationalism. Indeed, it has been the general trend to accept Xenophon and consider the others to be

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1150 Buckler (1980a), 212
1152 Hegesileos is elsewhere mentioned by contemporary sources (Xen. Ways. 3. 7; Ephorus FGrH 70 F85; cf. Schol. Dem. 19. 290).
1153 Kromayer (1903), 44 n. 1
erroneous. However, Roisman has recently attempted to reconcile the sources by indicating that, since the Athenian infantry were probably marching behind the cavalry, their arrival during the battle is not impossible. Therefore, the Athenian cavalry arrived just before Epameinondas’ cavalry and the Athenian infantry arrived a short while later. He also asserts that, since Xenophon’s sons, Diodorus and Gryllus, were involved in the cavalry engagement, and the latter was killed, he could plausibly have exaggerated the role of the cavalry in saving the city without recognizing that the arrival of the infantry was what caused the attackers to ultimately withdraw. This interpretation is certainly plausible and should not be rejected merely because one prefers the account of Xenophon.

Xenophon says that the Athenian cavalry proceeded from Eleusis, had dinner on the Isthmus before passing through Cleonae (Xen. Hell. 7. 5. 15), which lay about 4 kilometres to the northwest of ancient Nemea. The route described appears to be consistent with the modern road to the plain of Mantinea from Eleusis. The road, now known as the Moreas Motorway, passes just west of the modern village of Nestane and enters the plain in a valley southeast of Mt. Stravomyti. They would therefore approach the city from a southeasterly direction. Alternatively, they could have entered the plain by taking the path to modern Pikerni, along the northern foot of Mt. Barberi. From there they would have approached the city from the north, which may be consistent with Diodorus’ statement that they appeared on the opposite side of the plain (κατήντησαν ἐπὶ θάτερα τῆς Μαντινείας: Diod. 15. 84. 2): since the attackers certainly came from the south, the opposite side must be from the north. However, both of these options are inconsistent with Plutarch and Polybius’

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1154 E.g. Grote (1872), 320 n. 1; Cary (1933), 100; Laistner (1936), 218; Buckler (1980a), 212; Stylianou (1998), 511-512.
1155 Roisman (2017), 327-328.
1156 Xenophon also vaguely mentions that the Athenians had run into some bad luck (δυστυχήματος) at Corinth (Xen. Hell. 7. 5. 16). This has often been interpreted to mean that the Corinthians actually attacked them as they passed through the Isthmus, see Buckler (1980a), 212; Hamilton (1991), 248; Roisman (2017), 327. Underhill (1900), 304, and Breitenbach (1876), 245, both argue that the Corinthians may have, in some way, attempted to hinder the Athenians’ passage and, because Xenophon was probably living in Corinth at the time, he found it best to offer no further details. Grote (1872), 319 n. 3, concurs with this though wisely admits that the action itself is entirely unknowable. However, in spite of the fact that the Corinthians had no love for the Athenians at this time, they were politically neutral by the terms of the Peace of 366/5. Thus, an attack on the Athenian cavalry could well have constituted a breach of this arrangement. Xenophon’s only reason for mentioning it was to emphasize the trouble the Athenians had in getting to Mantinea. There is no necessary reason to think that the Corinthians were even involved. A possible alternative is that Epameinondas could have stationed a few men at the Isthmus in order to harass and slow the Athenian passage.
assertion that the Athenians appeared descending a mountain into the plain (Plut. De Gloria 2/346d; Polyb. 9. 8. 11). Another option may be that they entered the plain by going over the low saddle between the peak of Alesium and Mt. Stravomyti,\textsuperscript{1157} which would certainly give the appearance of a descent from a height. While all three suggestions are plausible, I would tend not to take specific statements from Diodorus too literally; therefore, it may be preferable to rely on Plutarch and Polybius.

Xenophon also emphasizes that the Athenians’ opportune arrival was due to fortune and not planned ahead of time; a fact which all of our main sources agree on.\textsuperscript{1158} Yet, this seems somewhat contradictory with Xenophon’s statement that the Athenian horsemen went to battle without having had breakfast, thus implying that, having had dinner at the Isthmus, they proceeded on their own forced march overnight.\textsuperscript{1159} The question then arises why the Athenian horse rushed to reach Mantinea if they had no idea that the Boeotian and Thessalian cavalry were about to make an attack? Though they may simply have wanted to reach Mantinea as quickly as possible, there is potentially an alternative reason for this. Overall, it is about 130 kilometres from Eleusis to Mantinea. Going by Xenophon’s directions, it is 55 kilometres to the Isthmus, which would have taken nearly 8 hours, going at an average (horse) walking pace of 7 kilometres per hour.\textsuperscript{1160} From there the distance to Mantinea is somewhat over 70 kilometres, which would have taken at least 10 hours, or perhaps longer when travelling by horseback at night. Therefore, accounting for the dinner and rest in the Isthmus for a couple of hours, the Athenian cavalry could have reached Mantinea from Eleusis in less than 24 hours.

Complications are, however, apparent when attempting to account for the Athenian infantry. It is highly doubtful that the 6,000 hoplites could have covered the distance in less than two days, even if they did make a forced march. Once again, without knowing about the attack on Mantinea, why would a forced march have been deemed worthwhile, especially considering the enormous energy exertion? Surely the infantry could not have been battle-

\textsuperscript{1157} Also suggested by Stylianou (1998), 511.

\textsuperscript{1158} Xen. Hell. 7. 5. 15; Diod. 15. 84. 2; Plut. De Gloria 2/346d; Polyb. 9. 8. 11-13.

\textsuperscript{1159} Stylianou (1998), 511. Though Kromayer (1903), 36 n. 2, thinks that the Athenian horse must have taken three days to march from Eleusis to Mantinea.

\textsuperscript{1160} Harris (1993), 32-33.
ready if they journeyed well over double the distance the Boeotian hoplites marched in their attack on Sparta. We should then conclude that the Athenian infantry did not make an especial effort to reach Mantinea. On the other hand, as noted above, it has been argued that the infantry did indeed arrive as the battle between the two cavalry forces raged. If this is true, the presence of the infantry needs to be further explained. It is possible, as insinuated above, that the infantry may have actually been transported by sea. This would mean that the army could have arrived at Mantinea within two days. It would then make sense that the cavalry went on a forced march the day before in order to arrive around the same time as the hoplites. But, since Xenophon strongly indicates that the whole army went by land, a new theory is required: the simplest interpretation is that, en route, the Athenians became privy to the fact that Mantinea was undefended and therefore sent their cavalry ahead of the infantry in order to secure the city. This would only be plausible if the Athenian army was already on the march before Epameinondas first set out from Tegea. It may be that Xenophon has exaggerated the nature of the Athenians’ forced march, when, in fact, they probably only heard of the attack on Sparta late the previous night, or even on the morning of the attack on Mantinea. Thus, probably just a few hours march from Mantinea, Hegesilaus was informed that the city was defenceless and therefore sent his cavalry unit ahead of the infantry; this would explain why the infantry arrived only a short while after the cavalry.

Thus, the Athenian cavalry had arrived at Mantinea, just before the attackers arrived, and many of them had yet to properly make camp. As the raid on the field commenced and panic ensued, the Mantineans bid the Athenians rescue those that were in danger of being captured. The Athenian horsemen, probably numbering several hundred, banded together and charged the enemy. Our sources provide very little detail of the engagement itself. Xenophon is more interested in glorifying the Athenian cavalry by emphasizing their inferior number and the fact that the Boeotian and Thessalian cavalry were considered the best horsemen. He does, however, indicate that there were losses on both sides, which appears to

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1161 Hegesilaus only had a little over 36 hours from the time Epameinondas left Tegea to the attack on Mantinea. It would be extraordinary if the Athenians could have become aware of the danger and reached the city in this timeframe.

1162 See Kromayer (1903), 44; Stylianou (1998), 513, who both opt for 600, since the Athenians would often send cavalry a tenth the size of their hoplite force. Roisman (2017), 327, 328 n. 71, estimates 300 to 400 since it was standard for the Athenians to employ this amount during the 370s to 350s. See Spence (1993), 85, 138.
have included his son, Gryllus.\textsuperscript{1163} Plutarch offers some extra detail, saying that the fighting occurred near the gates and wall of the city. This would make the most sense if the Athenian horse came from the city rather than from one of the entrances into the plain, where the attackers would surely have sallied forth to meet them. On accepting that the Athenian infantry arrived during or just before the engagement we can then include the statements of Plutarch and Polybius that, when the infantry understood the situation, Hegesileos arrayed the men into ranks and proceeded towards the city. Though the cavalry engagement was tough, it is probable that the attackers would have ultimately been successful, considering their superior numbers and skill, if it were not for the approach of the infantry. As Stylianou points out, Greek cavalry generally fought with more zeal when hoplite support was near at hand.\textsuperscript{1164} It is apparent that one of the Boeotian generals (perhaps the hipparch) was killed in the engagement by Gryllus, who also fell, along with Cephasodorus of Marathon, hipparch of the Athenians (Paus. 8. 9. 8, 10). As a result, the attack was called off and the bodies of the dead were retrieved under a truce. It is also implied that the Athenians erected a trophy of victory.

Epameinondas’ second attempt to catch the enemy off guard and secure an easy triumph was once again a failure. However, as Polybius rightly points out, the general acted exactly as a good strategist ought to but was defeated by fortune (Polyb. 9. 8. 13). Though we can speculate that Epameinondas may have somewhat underestimated his opponents, the arrival of the Athenian cavalry could not have been anticipated and, as Xenophon failed to mention, the Boeotian and Thessalian cavalry were undoubtedly far more exhausted than the Athenians.\textsuperscript{1165} Despite this the engagement apparently received a certain amount of praise, distinct from the major battle a few days later, in its own time when the famous painter and sculptor, Euphranor, painted the attack, with particular emphasis on the courageous resistance of the Athenian cavalry (Plut. De Gloria 2/346e-f). The painting was in the Ceramicus at

\textsuperscript{1163} Westlake (1975), 35-36. See Ephorus FGrH 70 F85 = Diog. Laert. 2. 53-55. Cf. Parker BNJ 70 F85.
\textsuperscript{1164} Stylianou (1998), 511.
\textsuperscript{1165} Kromayer (1903), 44; Westlake (1975), 34 n. 33; Buckler (1980a), 212; Roisman (2017), 327.
Athens and a copy was made in the gymnasium at Mantinea, which Pausanias saw (Paus. 1. 3. 4, 8. 9. 8).1166

The Battle of Mantinea

After the failure of the attack the Boeotian and Thessalian cavalry returned back to Tegea where they received a well needed rest while the forces of Mantinea and its allies returned to the city. Epameinondas could no longer rely wholly on subterfuge since the allied force of the enemy had now fully combined: a pitched battle must have seemed essentially inevitable. Xenophon offers three different reasons for Epameinondas’ decision: the first was that the time allocated to him for the campaign was almost up. It is not at all clear exactly what was the reason for this time constraint but most often scholars interpret that either the Theban assembly had placed a limit,1167 hoping that there would not be a repeat of the invasion of 370/69, or that the Boeotian allies had employed a constraint of their own, particularly since they were eager to harvest their crops.1168 The second reason was that the general did not want to leave his allies unsupported since they would surely be besieged by the enemy if he did so. Finally, and in the most detail, Xenophon indicates that Epameinondas was concerned that his reputation was at stake, especially since he had just been defeated in two separate engagements. Thus, all these things would be forgiven if he now achieved victory or, alternatively, it would at least be a glorious death (Xen. Hell. 7. 5. 18). While Epameinondas was surely not about to abandon his allies, Xenophon’s depiction of a desperate general, unwillingly pushed into a pitched battle as a last resort is undoubtedly incorrect. His attempts on Sparta and Mantinea should not necessarily be considered losses,
merely failed gambits or setbacks. From the beginning a pitched battle was to be expected but Epameinondas saw other opportunities that may have proven more expedient had they succeeded. He had certainly not put all his eggs into one basket and surely had the confidence to reproduce his success at Leuctra, especially with his numerically superior force. On the other hand, the general’s reputation back at Thebes was hardly unblemished. A great deal was riding on the outcome of the campaign, both politically and personally.

Plutarch indicates that Epameinondas remained in Tegea for a few days (Plut. Ages. 35. 1). While this is the only evidence we have of a temporal gap between the cavalry battle and the Battle of Mantinea proper, it would make a great deal of sense: both infantry and cavalry would have greatly benefited from a couple of days rest, especially since they were the army’s crack troops. Once the whole troop had recovered Epameinondas finally gave the order for them to prepare for battle. Without any sign of complaint, indeed, with enthusiasm, his men readied themselves with the horsemen painting their helmets white and the Arcadian hoplites painting clubs on their shields just like the Thebans. All, in turn, sharpened their spears and swords and shined their shields (Xen. Hell. 7. 5. 20). From the keenness for battle displayed by the force under Epameinondas it is clear that the coming confrontation was exactly what everyone was expecting to transpire, perhaps even hoping for. We are told, from Diodorus, that sacrifices were made on both sides and, on both sides, victory was predicted (Diod. 15. 85. 1). Thus Epameinondas, with the combined army of the Boeotian League and its allies, set forth towards the Mantinean border.

Before proceeding it is worthwhile establishing the respective armies’ numbers. Our chief information comes from the testimony of Diodorus (Diod. 15. 84. 4). He tells us that, on the Theban side, the infantry numbered at 30,000. At least 7,000 of these were Boeotian and as many as 4,000 or 5,000 from Locris, Malis, Aeniania and, especially, Thessaly, since

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1169 See Grote (1872), 321-322; Roisman (2017), 328, for similar sentiments.

1170 Grote (1872), 323 n. 1, speculates that Xenophon’s use of κράνη (helmet) refers to a headpiece, possibly made of wood or wickerwork, as in Xen. Hell. 2. 4. 25. Though the example in Xenophon refers to shields.

1171 Grote (1872), 322-323 n. 1, has also argued that this passage in Xenophon would be more naturally interpreted to mean that the Arcadians were armed only with clubs and that they inscribed the Theban ensign, which is not described, on their shields. However, Theban coins from around the late fifth to early fourth century have been found with Boeotian shields adorned with clubs, see Head (1881), 211-213, 217.
Alexander of Pherae would have had a reasonable number at his disposal and many of the other Thessalian states were, at this stage, quite loyal to Thebes. We are also informed that a large number of these were light infantry (hammipoi) and peltasts (Diod. 15. 85. 4; cf. Xen. Hell. 7. 5. 23-25). From Euboea an estimate of around 3,000, as were sent to Nemea in 394, is realistic. Of these, most probably came from Eretria, though undoubtedly some were from Chalcis. Also at Nemea were the Sicyonians, who provided some 1,500, which again may be a reasonable estimate for this occasion (Xen. Hell. 4. 2. 16-17). From Arcadia Tegea and Megalopolis probably had 2,000-3,000 veteran hoplites left over from the eparitoi but, since their territory was at the seat of battle, a few thousand less experienced men would plausibly have joined along: perhaps 3,000 from both cities and their surrounding territory would be reasonable. The polis of Asea would only have sent a handful of men since much of their population had been involved in the synoecism of Megalopolis (Paus. 8. 27. 3). Pallantium, on the other hand, did not end up taking part in the synoecism and could probably have sent a few hundred men, though their involvement in the battle has been questioned. Lastly, from Messenia, the population there would surely allow for a fairly large contribution, but they were probably not expected to send an overly conspicuous amount, perhaps some 2,000-3,000. These figures make an upper estimate of about 28,000 hoplites.

Diodorus says that the Boeotians had a total of 3,000 cavalry. These would have consisted mainly of Boeotians and Thessalians, though perhaps with a handful from elsewhere. Stylianou considers the figure to be too high, suggesting that Ephorus may have guessed that the cavalry were a tenth the size of the infantry. Polyaenus indicates that, during the battle, a cavalry action took place with 1,600 horsemen (Polyaen. 2. 3. 14).

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1172 Eretria alone could have sent up to 5,000 soldiers, see Reber et al. (2004), 652.
1173 Tegea may have contributed some 2,400 hoplites at the Battle of Nemea; perhaps more, see Roy (1971b), 440. The population of Megalopolis is difficult to estimate but was certainly large. See Nielsen (2004), 521.
1174 The extent to which Asea’s population actually joined Megalopolis is not certain, see Moggi (1974), 87-88; however, at maximum the city could not have been much larger than about 3,500 and could not therefore have provided much more than a few hundred, see Nielsen (2004), 510.
1177 See above, 139-140.
1178 Chalcis provided 100 cavalry at Nemea (Xen. Hell. 4. 2. 17) and Sicyon was known for breeding horses, see Gaebel (2002), 20.
Because of this Stylianou further estimates that the Boeotians and Thessalians numbered between 1,000 and 1,200 with a few hundred others.\textsuperscript{1179} Certainly 3,000 would be a much larger cavalry force than was usual at the time but the Thessalians were known to be able to field astonishing numbers of horsemen.\textsuperscript{1180} Therefore a higher number is, arguably, quite feasible and Polyaenus’ number may be nearly correct.

On the side of the Mantineans we are told that they mustered an infantry force of more than 20,000. From Sparta there were three \textit{lochoi}, probably numbering close to 1,000,\textsuperscript{1181} along with some mercenaries.\textsuperscript{1182} Athens had sent 6,000 hoplites.\textsuperscript{1183} The amount from Elis is difficult to determine but may have been between 2,000 and 3,000.\textsuperscript{1184} From Achaea, one would not expect a huge number but they could certainly muster a couple thousand soldiers if they were compelled to.\textsuperscript{1185} Finally, the Mantineans, who were not known for large military contributions,\textsuperscript{1186} however, were also liable to have some remnants of the \textit{eparitoi}. Thus, a figure of around 3,000 may be plausible. A 17 kilometre journey to the north lies Arcadian Orchomenus, which could surely have sent up to 1,000 men from there and the surrounding territory if they had to.\textsuperscript{1187} These moderate estimates do not, nevertheless, quite add up to the amount purported, therefore perhaps Buckler is right in suggesting that the figures simply reflect both armies’ relative strengths.\textsuperscript{1188} On the other hand, the Mantineans were in dire straits since the outcome of the battle could have had

\textsuperscript{1179} Stylianou (1998), 514.
\textsuperscript{1180} See above, 122.
\textsuperscript{1181} Kromayer (1903), 115-116, reckons a total number of 6,000 hoplites from Sparta, though he does not take account of the probability that the nine \textit{lochoi} still remained in Sparta. While the total size of the Spartan army at this time has been disputed, the general trend of the period would favour a lower number, closer to 4,000. See Stylianou (1998), 288-289, for bibliography and discussion.
\textsuperscript{1182} See above, 291.
\textsuperscript{1183} See above, 302.
\textsuperscript{1184} At the Battle of Mantinea in 418, Elis sent 3,000 soldiers (Thuc. 5. 75). Likewise, at the Battle of Nemea Elis contributed to the 3,000 grouped with Triphylia, Acroia and Lasion (Xen. \textit{Hell.} 4. 2. 16), though Elis is liable to have provided the majority of these.
\textsuperscript{1185} The Achaeans would later send 1,500 soldiers in support of Phocis in 354 and 2,000 in 352 (Diod. 16. 30. 4, 37, 3).
\textsuperscript{1186} Mantinea sent 1,000 at the Battle of Mantinea in 418 (Thuc. 5. 50). Lysias also says that the population of Mantinea was less than 3,000 (Lys. 34. 7). As Nielsen (2004), 518, notes, it is unwise to attempt an estimate of the total population, based on this. However, the figure of 3,000 is surely far too low for the entire population and, instead, may reflect the amount capable of taking to the field.
\textsuperscript{1187} Orchomenus sent 600 to the Battle of Plataea (Hdt. 9. 28. 4), though one would expect somewhat more by this stage in time.
\textsuperscript{1188} Buckler (1980a), 316 n. 54. Though I may have underestimated the Spartan contribution. See above, n. 1181.
serious consequences for them. As a result, it is to be expected that they utilized every able body that they could spare; therefore, an extra 1,000 or so would not be surprising. Diodorus does, in fact twice refer to the presence of some other (ἄλλοι τινές) unspecified soldiers at the battle (Diod. 15. 84. 4, 85. 2). This would bring us to an upper estimate of 18,000 hoplites.

The cavalry figure reported is again given as a tenth of the total hoplite force, i.e. 2,000. While Kromayer accepts this figure, assuming that both Sparta and Athens sent 600 each and some 200-300 from Elis, Stylianou argues that a smaller force is more plausible since only a few hundred were liable to come from both Sparta and Arcadia. Indeed, if we accept the lower figure of Epameinondas’ cavalry, we would expect a lower figure still from their opposition, perhaps about 1,000. Overall Diodorus’ numbers appear to be fairly reasonable if not a little exaggerated. With such a numerical superiority, there is no question that Epameinondas and his soldiers were very confident in their chances at achieving victory.

Upon leading the grand army north from Tegea towards the border of the territory of Mantinea, Epameinondas would have quickly learnt of the enemy’s dispositions. The actual site of the battle is uncertain since no definitive geographical or archaeological features, as indicated by the sources, have been securely identified. We essentially have two pieces of information: after setting off, Epameinondas took his army to some mountains to the west (Xen. Hell. 7. 5. 21) and, when the Theban general had been wounded he was taken to a nearby place called Scope, where he was subsequently buried (Paus. 8. 11. 7-8). In an early study of the area Boblaye seemed to place the battle in the Pelagos wood around the sites of Vosouna and Matsagra, the latter of which has almost now been subsumed into the city of

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1189 Kromayer (1903), 120.
1190 Stylianou (1998), 513.
1191 For the troop numbers at the Battle of Mantinea, see also Kromayer (1903), 114-123, whose estimates are somewhat higher than mine. Kromayer (1903), 119 n. 3, argues that the city of Phlius sent some soldiers on the side of Mantinea, which would undoubtedly have included cavalry, cf. Stylianou (1998), 513. Kromayer cites their inclusion in the alliance of 362 with Athens (IGII² 112) and the fact that Diodorus mentions other (unnamed) soldiers (ἄλλοι τινές) (Diod. 15. 84. 4, 85. 2). However, Phlius, along with Corinth (who were also absent), had obtained a neutral status after their peace with Thebes in 366/5, see above, 223, therefore they would have had no obligation to join the campaign.
1192 In spite of the feasibility of Diodorus’ figures there remains a deal of scepticism among modern historians. See Cary (1933), 101; Laistner (1936), 219, who think both sides were closer to 25,000. Also see Roisman (2017), 329-331, citing Polybius’ criticism of Ephorus’ account of the battle, (Polyb. 12. 25f. 4-5 = Ephorus FGrH 70 T 20) Cf. Parker BNJ 70 T 20.
Tripoli, but according to old maps lay nearly 3 kilometres to the northeast of the city centre. Vosouna also ceases to be mentioned on modern maps but appears to have been about 2.3 kilometres to the east of Matsagra, approximately around the site of the modern village, Pelagos. Boblaye, citing one Vietti, says the tomb of Epameinondas was discovered in this area.\textsuperscript{1193} This section of the plain would certainly be suited for a pitched battle; however, subsequent investigation into the area found nothing of the sort and it is possible that Vietti had instead discovered the temple of Poseidon, Hermes or Heracles. This position would also place the battle much too close to Tegea, giving the impression that the Mantinean force attacked the territory, which goes against all indication in the sources and provides no suitable candidate for the mountains, which Xenophon refers to.\textsuperscript{1194}

Perhaps more reasonable is the suggestion of Leake who, taking Xenophon’s statement into account, says that Epameinondas moved towards the foot of Mt. Maenalus, just south of Scope. Presumably he refers to the site of the modern village Skopi, which sits on the southern foot of Mt. Mytika. From here, Leake says, he followed the base of Mytika northward into the Mantinean plain. He then lined up his troops with his back to the foot of Mytika and the mountains running northwest to the peak of Mt. Kapsias.\textsuperscript{1195} This would place the battle somewhere in the plain between Mytika and Mantinea. Kromayer criticizes Leake since he mistakenly thinks that Epameinondas was leading the right wing of the army rather than the left, which is indisputable.\textsuperscript{1196} On the other hand, if we ignore this slip, one could see how this section of mountain could have been ideally suited for drawing up the phalanx. One issue, however, is that Xenophon specifically says that the army did not use the shortest (συντομωτάτην) route to reach the enemy. If Epameinondas was aiming for the northern foot of Mytika then the narrow plain between Mytika and Kapnistra would manifestly have not been guarded; there would thus be no point in heading for the southern foot and then skirting around the base of the mountain when they simply could have taken the main road until they passed the mountain before proceeding west to the northern foot. Overall, Kromayer discards

\textsuperscript{1193} Boblaye (1836), 143.
\textsuperscript{1194} Fougères (1898), 112 n. 2; Kromayer (1903), 49-50.
\textsuperscript{1195} Leake (1830b), 81-82.
\textsuperscript{1196} Kromayer (1903), 50. See also Loring (1895), 87, who supposes that Leake chose this site since the battle is designated as “Mantinea” and therefore assumed that it must have taken place in the territory of Mantinea.
these two suggestions because of factual impossibilities and because they lack external justification from the sources.1197

We thus come to the most generally accepted site of the battle. When examining the Tripolitan plain, it is clear that the narrowing in the plain between Mytika and Kapnistra is the most obvious and naturally defensible point between Tegea and Mantinea. Here the plain is not much more than two kilometres wide and with 20,000 men they could easily cover this entire section.1198 This factor has been recognised by Grote, who asserts that the Mantinean force was here lined up; thus, he interprets Xenophon’s statement to mean that Epameinondas proceeded east to the foot of Mt Mainalos (approximately nearby modern Tripoli) before skirting northward toward Mytika, where, at some point, the army faced to the northeast, toward the enemy’s position.1199 Loring later offered two pertinent arguments in favour of this: firstly, Pausanias says that Epameinondas was killed in the Pelagos forest (Paus. 8. 11. 10), which probably stretched from around Mytika some distance into the Mantinean plain and some distance into the Tegean plain.1200 Thus, Mytika is a very plausible candidate for the site of Scope. Secondly, Xenophon, who provides our only information on the army’s march from Tegea, says that “he did not take the quickest route to approach the enemy, but steered toward the western hills opposite Tegea (Xen. Hell. 7. 5. 21).1201 Loring argues that τὰ πρὸς ἑσπέραν ὅρη should naturally be interpreted to refer to the hills above Pallantium, i.e. the Krávari range or, more specifically, Mt. Maenalus. And, since the battle was surely fought in the direction of Mantinea, it is generally assumed that the army marched on a northwesterly bearing.1202 Fougères and Kromayer subsequently offered further circumstantial evidence on the strategic logic of guarding the plain at that point and

1197 Kromayer (1903), 50. Philippson (1892), 94, has identified the Scope with the hill of Gourtsouli, just over half a kilometre to the north of Mantinea. But, as Kromayer (1903), 47, cf. 51 n. 2, has noted, the battle surely took place, at the very least, somewhere between Tegea and Mantinea.
1198 See Kromayer (1903), 52-53, who, however, incorrectly measured the width of the plain to be only about 1,650 metres. Cf. Fougères (1898), 586, who measured between 2,000 and 2,500 metres and cf. Pritchett (1969), 65, whose measurements ranged from 2,100, on a 640 metre contour, and 2,400, on a 660 metre contour.
1199 Grote (1872), 323-324.
1200 See above, 301-302.
1201 τὴν μὲν συντομωτάτην πρὸς τοὺς πολεμίους οὖκ ἦγε, πρὸς δὲ τὰ πρὸς ἑσπέραν ὅρη καὶ ἀντιπέραν τῆς Τεγέας ἤγετο.
1202 Loring (1895), 87-88.
Epameinondas’ reaction being prudent if it were so.\textsuperscript{1203} We must also add that ἀντιπέραν τῆς Τεγέας confirms that the circuitous path was taken in the Tegeatic plain and, since, as iterated above, this meant they were not liable to have proceeded into the Mantinean plain, this manoeuvre would only have been useful to Epameinondas if the enemy were guarding the narrow at Mytika. It is also apparent that the Mantinean border actually spanned somewhat south of Mytika;\textsuperscript{1204} therefore, a battle in the north of the Tegeatic plain would still constitute a battle of ‘Mantinea’. It is worth adding that Polyaenus refers to the battle as being near Tegea (Polyaen. 2. 3. 14).

Because of these reasons the area just south of Mytika appears the most reasonable site of the battle and, indeed, as we shall see, it has been generally accepted by historians. However, Roisman has most recently expressed some doubt by pointing out that the landmarks referred to in the sources are all uncertain and that there are also several possibilities further north in the territory of Mantinea.\textsuperscript{1205} However, as has been highlighted, if Epameinondas had entered the Mantinean plain, there would not have been any point for him to head west until he went passed Mytika, which would contradict Xenophon’s indication that they marched to the western mountain in the vicinity of Tegea. Further, on this point Roisman is proven incorrect since the mountains Xenophon refers to should be considered a landmark and can be fairly certainly identified. Thus, on perusing the various possibilities for the site of the battle, in the end, the communis opinio should still take precedence. Accepting this, the force of the Mantineans had been drawn up between Mt. Mytika and the northern peak of Kapnistra, just below the Pelagos wood, which is not liable to have encroached much into the battlefield. The position stands nearly 12 kilometres from Tegea and would have been easily defendable with such a force.

On spying the manoeuvres of Epameinondas’ army, the Mantineans and their allies readied themselves for battle. Diodorus tells us that the right wing was occupied by the Mantineans and other Arcadians followed by the Spartan force, which probably included the mercenaries. The Eleans and Achaeans took their place in the centre of the phalanx and the

\textsuperscript{1203} Fougères (1898), 111, 586; Kromayer (1903), 51-55.
\textsuperscript{1204} Pritchett (1969), 41-44.
\textsuperscript{1205} Roisman (2017), 328-329. n. 73.
Athenians established their position on the left (Diod. 15. 85. 2). The Athenian cavalry were then placed on the left flank, while the Spartan cavalry probably took the right. We are also told that some Elean horsemen were stationed in the rear (Diod. 15. 85. 3, 7). It has been suggested that Polybius’ criticism of Ephorus arose from the former’s contention that there was not enough space in this area of the plain to hold so many hoplites, along with the cavalry occupying both wings. However, the calculations of modern scholars have found it perfectly plausible for an army of 20,000 hoplites drawn up 10 to 12 deep and, for the cavalry, a depth of six to eight for a total of 2,000. This would fit even more so, if the cavalry numbers in Diodorus are exaggerated figures. Though overall command belonged to Mantinea, no notable general of the Mantineans is mentioned and it is entirely feasible that Agesilaus had the primary influence on the disposition of the army, being, by far, the most experienced commander on the field.

It is not absolutely clear what was intended from these dispositions but the Elean cavalry was undoubtedly a reserve with the expectation that, at some point, the enemy would break through. This was a prudent decision given the general superiority of their opponents. Their position in the narrow, if true, was also apt since the steep mountainsides would prevent the enemy from surrounding them with their superior numbers. Since both wings were defended by ample cavalry and the left held by the generally competent Athenian hoplites, their dispositions were about as good as one could expect from the situation. On the other hand, it was surely a mistake to allow the Mantineans to occupy the far right when the Spartan soldiers were certainly a better option, especially when fighting the veteran Boeotians and the Sacred Band of the Thebans. This probably reflects the ultimate authority of the Mantinean force: though Agesilaus may have had reservations against this action, his allies had the prerogative and the desire for the position of honour on the right wing.

1207 Six in Xen. Hell. 7. 5. 23.
1208 Pritchett (1969), 64-65. Kromayer (1903), 52-53, gives the hoplite depth as 13 to 14; however, his measurements for the width of the plain are far too low, see above, 313n. 1198.
1209 See above, 311-312.
1210 Xenophon’s curious omission of Agesilaus at the battle has led some to believe that he was not present. See Grote (1872), 326; Fougères (1898), 585. However, he had already been pegged as the commander of the Spartan force previously and we have no reason to doubt that this was still the case. See Kromayer (1903), 55 n. 2; Buckler (1980a), 213-214. Also, Plut. Apo. Lac. 2. 75/214c, which is generally overlooked, strongly suggests that Agesilaus was present.
1211 Stylianou (1998), 515.
The position of the enemy stands nearly 12 kilometres from Tegea and would have been easily defensible with such a force. However, Epameinondas did not want to face them in an area where he could not make use of his superior numbers; as a result, he decided to employ a cunning strategem. First, he organized his men into ranks as if they intended to give battle right away. But, instead of heading due north, he proceeded in a northwesterly direction towards Mt. Maenalus. It has often been suggested that he specifically went to the low hillock at the eastern foot of Mt. Maenalus called Merkovouni. Once again, if the position of the Mantinean force is correct, this would indeed be the obvious place in the vicinity to establish a defensive position while continuing to face the enemy. The distance to Merkovouni from Tegea is nearly 10 kilometres and would have taken around two hours to march: this is a seemingly negligible distance from what the crack Boeotian troops had achieved just a few days earlier.

Once they arrived on the eastern foot of Merkovouni, in plain view of the enemy, Epameinondas extended the army out to its full length, stretching out into the plain in a southeasterly direction: at this stage they appear to have been lined up in a regular phalanx formation of between 8 to 12 deep, giving a total front of somewhere between 2,500 to 3,750 metres (given an estimate of approximately one metre per soldier), without including the cavalry. He therefore gave the initial appearance that they were preparing to give battle. However, the order was then given for the army to ground their weapons in order to give the appearance that they were making camp for the evening. As a result, the enemy were lulled into a false sense of security and thus began to relax, believing they would not fight on that day (Xen. Hell. 7. 5. 21-22). This strategem was, by now, very typical of Epameinondas and demonstrates his skill in deceiving his enemy. Whether or not it was a deciding factor in the outcome of the battle is questionable, but it surely gave the Boeotian force an edge over the less experienced of their opponents.

Amidst the deception Epameinondas continued to show his true genius when he re-organized the disposition of his army. According to Xenophon he brought successive companies to the attacking wing (left), thus deepening it greatly (Xen. Hell. 7. 5. 22). Arrian

1212 Loring (1895), 88; Kromayer (1903), 5; Buckler (1980a), 213.
tells us that this process involved only the Boeotian troops (Arr. Tact. 11. 2). This is reasonable since it was they who had the most experience fighting in this manner. It is also thought that, as at Leuctra, the wing was lined up to a depth of 50 hoplites. This would give a front of about 140 metres for the left wing and between some 1,900 and 2,900 metres for the rest. An overall estimate of somewhat over 2 kilometres would be reasonable since a much wider front would not fit in the narrow of Mytika and Kapnistra. Since the Boeotians took the far left, the rest of the left wing was taken up by the Arcadians. The Argive force lined up at the right and the middle was taken up by the rest of the allies: Euboeans, Locrians, Sicyonians, Messenians, Malians, Aenianians, Thessalians and other allies. As with the enemy, the cavalry were divided up and placed on each wing (Diod. 15. 85. 2). The light-armed troops or hammipoi were also intermingled with the cavalry units (Xen. Hell. 7. 5. 23-25; Diod. 15. 85. 4). Some Euboean troops and some mercenaries were stationed on nearby hills to the east in order to attack the Athenians in the left wing if they attempted to aid the right (Xen. Hell. 7. 5. 24; Diod. 15. 85. 6). We are given the impression that all of this was achieved without the opposing force realizing what they were doing.

Epameinondas had clearly devised a variation on what he attempted at Leuctra, though this time on a much greater scale: he was planning on advancing obliquely with the strongest section of his army to attack the strongest section of the enemy. This time we are

1213 E.g. Kromayer (1903), 64; Pritchett (1969), 65; Buckler (1980a), 217.
1214 See Kromayer (1903), 58-59; Pritchett (1969), 65-66, who make similar measurements.
1215 Hamilton (1991), 250 n. 121, presumes that Diodorus list the centre units from left to right and questions how the Euboeans would later make it to the right wing. But his listing might be arbitrary on this occasion and we need not assume that all of the Euboeans were sent to the hills to the east.
1216 Hammipoi are mentioned by Herodotus (Hdt. 7. 158. 4) and were used by the Boeotians in 411 (Thuc. 5. 57. 2); however, this is the first occasion in which they are described in action. It has been suggested that they were employed by only a few states at this time: perhaps only in Boeotia and Thessaly. See Konijnendijk (2018), 111. On hammipoi in general see Spence (1993), 21, 58-59; van Wees (2004), 81-85. For Macedonian hammipoi see Heckel (2012), 15-20.
1217 It has been supposed that this refers to a rise in the ground just northeast of Matsagra. See Loring (1895), 88; Fougères (1898), 588; Pritchett (1969), 58-59; Buckler (1980a), 217; Stylianou (1990), 517. However, the particular area of terrain referred to is not high enough and would place them far too far south to observe the battle. Perhaps more viable is the view of Kromayer (1903), 67 n. 1, who received a further observation from Fougères suggesting some of the lower slopes of Mt. Kapnistra and the river Zanovistas. Indeed, it would make the most sense if they occupied a position with a decent view of the area. I suggest that this unit of soldiers went all the way to the eastern side of the plain on the lower slopes of Kapnistra, where an excellent view of manoeuvres could be acquired. See also Roisman (2017), 331.
specifically told that the cavalry were on both wings but it is unclear whether this was done
as a response to the Mantinean force’s dispositions or vice versa. What is clear is that
Epameinondas was not taking any chance with his wings on this occasion: he probably was
not concerned with the Spartan horse that would protect the enemy’s right; however, there
was a genuine danger from the Athenian cavalry who were surely still beaming from their
victory a few days earlier and, by that token, the Boeotian and Thessalian cavalry would
conversely have been anxious, since they would again have to face them. Thus, the use of the
hammipoi was probably meant to be something of a secret weapon since the enemy were not
liable to have expected them. We are also told that the cavalry on the right were Theban
(Boeotian) and, on the left, were the Thessalian horse with other Thebans (Diod. 15. 85. 4, 7,
8). They were apparently drawn up in an embolon or ram-like formation (Xen. Hell. 7. 5.
24).\textsuperscript{1218}

Having established the army’s dispositions, Epameinondas gave the order to march
out. Xenophon describes the approach of the left wing as that of the prow of a trireme (Xen.
Hell. 7. 5. 23) As the grand army advanced in an oblique formation, with the left wing
forward and the right wing tilting back, a distance of somewhat over two kilometres, the
enemy were taken by surprise. Since some had already removed their breastplates and
unbridled their horses, they were forced to reform their dispositions hastily (Xen. Hell. 7. 5.
22). In spite of this we are given every indication that the Mantinean force restored battle
order in time\textsuperscript{1219} and may have drawn up its left wing southwesterly in order to face the
approaching army face on. From Merkovouni there are few obstacles and there would have
been little trouble in maintaining ranks during the advance.\textsuperscript{1220} Thus, the two sides were
poised for the coming brawl.

As the main forces got closer Epameinondas sent ahead his cavalry units ahead in
order to create a dust cloud. Under this cover he moved the phalanx to higher ground (Front.

\textsuperscript{1218} This is distinct from technical term embolon or wedge formation, see above, 108 n. 444.
\textsuperscript{1219} Buckler (1980a), 218; Roisman (2017), 332.
\textsuperscript{1220} Kromayer (1903), 59, 68; Buckler (1980a), 217-218.
This was probably the lower slope of Mytika to the north of the plain. The Theban was attempting to attack the enemy’s right wing in full force with every advantage possible. Following this, Diodorus reports that the battle broke out with cavalry engagements at both flanks. On Epameinondas’ right we are told that it was the Athenian cavalry that attacked. We are given the impression that they advanced beyond their own hoplite ranks, probably with the hope of attacking the Boeotian force’s right flank. The Theban cavalry and hammipoi were at hand and, after some fighting, in which many were wounded and harried to exhaustion, the Athenian cavalry retreated back towards their line. Diodorus emphasizes the advantage and skill offered by the use of the light infantry combined with the cavalry as the primary reason for their success (Diod. 15. 85. 3-5) and Xenophon too recognizes this factor (Xen. Hell. 7. 5. 25). The hammipoi and peltasts, in their excitement, made an attack on the Athenians on the enemy’s left. They were joined in this by the Euboeans and mercenaries that had been posted on the nearby high ground; however, both forces were repelled by the Athenian hoplites, probably with help from their reformed cavalry unit. Then, the Boeotian cavalry made their own attack against the enemy phalanx, hoping to outflank them. Unfortunately for them, the Elean cavalry reserve came to the rescue just in time, killing a number of Boeotians and saving the left wing of the Mantineans (Diod. 15. 85. 6-7; Xen. Hell. 7. 5. 25).

Meanwhile, the cavalry battle on Epameinodas’ left raged simultaneously. It probably occurred on the low slopes of Mytika, with the Boeotian and Thessalian horse facing somewhat downhill toward the enemy. Agesilaus, observing Epameinondas’ manoeuvre to obtain higher ground, probably sought to attack the Boeotian left and prevent their oblique march along the slope. However, though the Spartan horse are said to have fought valiantly, their lack of skill and inability to cope with the hammipoi led to a retreat back to their phalanx (Diod. 15. 85. 8). As with the Athenian cavalry we are given the impression that the Spartan cavalry managed to restore their ranks on the right wing. In either

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1221 Buckler (1980a), 216, thinks that the dust cloud was employed to mask the deepening of the left wing but both Frontinus and Polyaeus state that it was used to hide the movement towards higher ground. Cf. Kromayer (1903), 65 n. 3, who similarly disputes the reasoning of the sources.
1222 Roisman (2017), 333, presumes the fight with the Euboeans and mercenaries to have been a separate fight against the Athenian cavalry.
case great tactical control was demonstrated by both Spartan and Athenian cavalry. All of this appears to have occurred before the hoplite forces engaged one another.\footnote{Buckler (1980a), 217, 316 n. 57, presumes that this cavalry engagement occurred in front of the opposing phalanxes rather than on the wings since, he believes, that the slopes of Mytika would not have allowed for cavalry units to have been stationed there. However, this contention is not based on any literal indication in the sources, rather Buckler’s personal observation of the topography. There is no need to assume that Epameinondas’ left went so far up the slopes that the cavalry could not be placed on the wing. There is over 200 metres of slight inclining before the mountain gets too steep. With his cavalry drawn up in a ram-like formation their front was not liable to be very wide.}

Epameinondas probably kept his cavalry force close by on his left, since the Spartan horse had returned to the Mantinean right. The massive hammer-shaped column of the Boeotians then finally crashed into the enemy’s right wing. Here there is a serious divergence in our main sources. Xenophon very simply states that, at the point where his wing struck, Epameinondas caused the entirety of the enemy force to flee (Xen. Hell. 7. 5. 24). On the other hand, Diodorus offers a very different account. He comments on the intensity of the combat with many spears snapping and soldiers resorting to swords. Both sides fought courageously and, as the conflict continued, both sides inflicted many casualties but there was no sign of victory for either. Then, Epameinondas, deciding that decisive action was needed, took charge of his best men (perhaps the Sacred Band)\footnote{As also suggested by Roisman (2017), 334.} in close formation and pressed the attack. We are told that Epameinondas threw the first javelin and managed to hit the leader of the Spartan force. Following this, with the rest of his force, slew many more and drove the rest into a panic that caused them to flee. While the Mantinean and Spartan soldiers retreated, the Boeotians continued to push into the rear of the enemy, killing a large number (Diod. 15. 86. 1-5). At about this point, before the Spartans had fled (but perhaps after the Arcadians),\footnote{Kromayer (1903), 69-70, interprets the passage in Diodorus to mean that the best soldiers of the Spartans pulled themselves in front of the Arcadian troops, but it would make more sense if they pressed towards the enemy’s left as the Arcadians fell back, since the latter held the very right of their phalanx. See Roisman (2017), 334.} a body of them charged forward against Epameinondas’ position and unleashed a hail of javelins from which he received a number of wounds before collapsing to the ground (Nep. Epam. 9). Plutarch tells us that Agesilaus ordered his men to specifically target Epameinondas (Plut. Apo. Lac. 2. 75/ 214c-d). Because of this an intense fight
developed over the wounded general’s body and eventually the Boeotians over-exhausted the Spartans and forced them to flee (Diod. 15. 87. 1-2).\footnote{Xenophon has generally been accepted over Diodorus on this matter; however, there has never been a conclusive reason to maintain this assumption, especially considering that Xenophon’s account is lacking in many details and is, for the most part, reconcilable with Diodorus. Polybius’ criticism of Ephorus’ account of the battle has often been cited in this case (e.g. see Grote (1872), 329 n. 2): he believes that Ephorus described far too many movements and did not at all understand the battle (Ephorus FGrH 70 T 20 = Polyb. 12. 25f. 4-6). This would appear to be the case if we only accepted Xenophon; however, if it is understood that Diodorus’ account has merely exaggerated some of the details, he helps illuminate many of the omissions of Xenophon. More recent studies tend to view Diodorus’ account more favourably: see Hamilton (1991), 249-251; Roisman (2017), 329-335.}

While Xenophon surely has omitted the actual carnage that did occur at Mantinea, Diodorus’ account has possibly exaggerated the overall heroics of Epameinondas, though he undoubtedly did lead the charge. We are not provided with any figures for the overall losses at this battle, but it is apparent that they were high on both sides, though perhaps a relatively greater number from the Mantinean force. Xenophon says that no soldier was killed beyond the point where the army fled and that the victors failed to pursue the defeated. This corresponds somewhat with Diodorus who says that the Boeotians pursued for a short time but went back in order to secure the dead bodies (Xen. Hell. 7. 5. 25; Diod. 15. 87. 2). In fact, Xenophon’s account does not even deny that casualties were high; instead, he emphasizes that there were no casualties after the Mantinean right fled, therefore, by implication there could have been any number of casualties before this occurred. In spite of the fact that the battle was a tactical victory for Epameinondas, the success of the Athenians on the Mantinean left, meant that both sides claimed victory and erected a trophy since both sides were in possession of the enemy’s dead. Initially neither side sent an envoy requesting to retrieve their fallen and admit defeat, but eventually the Spartans conceded and both sides were given permission (Diod. 15. 87. 2-4).

*The Death of Epameinondas*

Perhaps the most significant result of the Battle of Mantinea was the mortal wounding of Epameinondas. His death quickly inspired much praise and was a point of interest for writers throughout antiquity, especially due to its apparent heroic nature. While
many of the details are certainly spurious it may be possible to sieve through the evidence for actual facts. On the other hand, it is additionally worth assessing their origin and purpose in the overall mythology of the deceased Theban general.

The extant material that we have is relatively ample and seems to indicate at least three or four different traditions of the details surrounding the death. Our only contemporary source that makes reference to this is from Xenophon who simply says that Epameinondas had fallen, though he makes it apparent that this occurred around about the time that the enemy’s right wing had retreated (Xen. Hell. 7. 5. 25). This is hardly surprising given Xenophon’s clear disdain for the Theban; but also, because, perhaps more pertinently, his interest lay in the effect that the general’s death had on the ending of the battle, not in the nature of Epameinondas’ death. Our most prevalent account is presented fairly uniformly by a number of writers including Nepos, Diodorus, Justin, Cicero, Ammianus Marcellinus and Valerius Maximus. These writers provide some or all of the following: Epameinondas was taken from the battlefield with a spear-tip lodged in his chest and was informed that once it was removed, he would surely die. The general inquired as to whether his shield had been secured and whether the enemy had been routed. His followers then despaired since he would die childless, to which Epameinondas replied that, on the contrary, he had two daughters: Leuctra and Mantinea. Having said this, he pulled the spear-tip from his chest and died.1227

Similar to this but ultimately an alternate tradition is preserved in the writings of Plutarch and Aelian: they say that, having been brought from the field mortally wounded, he ordered his attendants to tell either Daiphantus or Iolaidus to assume command of the army. But, on hearing that they had both been killed in the battle he said that they should instead make terms with the enemy since no competent commander still remained.1228 As neither Plutarch nor Aelian’s stories bear any similarity with the other accounts, we can confirm that the traditions have different origins, especially considering that, out of all Plutarch’s attestations of Epameinondas, he never once mentions his childlessness or that he inquired about his shield at his death. This appears to indicate a difference between Diodorus and

1227 Diod. 15. 87. 5-6; Nep. Epam. 9-10; Just. 6. 8. 11-13; Amm. Marc. Re. Gest. 25. 3. 8; Cic. Fam. 5. 12. 5; Fin. 2. 30; Val. Max. Memorabilia 3. 2(ext). 5.
Nepos’ source(s), which was probably Ephorus, and Plutarch’s, which may have been Callisthenes. The latter’s account reflects Epameinondas’ military pragmatism all the way to the end, whereas, the former emphasizes the heroic nature of his death.

Scholars have tended to view some aspects of these accounts with suspicion, while accepting one or two details. In general it is thought that Epameinondas was taken from the battlefield with a spear tip in his chest and that, on hearing of his victory, he removed it.\textsuperscript{1229} Along with this, the Callisthenic version with the deaths of the Theban officers, Diaphantus and Iolaidus has further received some concordance.\textsuperscript{1230} Indeed, Plutarch elsewhere adds that one of Epameinondas’ lovers, Caphisodorus, was also killed in the battle (Plut. \textit{Amatorius} 17/761d). Nevertheless, all of these stories have been characterized, by Swoboda, as fictitious inventions of the same tradition (“geschäftige Erfindungen derselben Tradition”).\textsuperscript{1231} Though perhaps liable to be fictitious, as I have argued, we cannot assume that they originated from the same tradition, even more so considering that both anecdotes are meant to be designated as Epameinondas’ last words, making them irreconcilable with one another.

However, when one delves into the specificities of our sources a number of clues to their origins appear to arise. As Stylianou has surmized,\textsuperscript{1232} the details surrounding the Battle of Mantinea must have developed amidst a certain amount of confusion, especially since both sides claimed to be victorious. We must therefore be wary of any details that are wholly incompatible with the situation. For instance, Nepos’ account of Epameinondas’ response to his childlessness is not placed within the context of the battle. We are instead told that Epameinondas said it in response to Pelopidas’ criticism of him and that it was only the Battle of Leuctra that was his daughter (Nep. \textit{Epam}. 9. 10. 1-3). This implies that the context of the anecdote is set before Mantinea and, indeed, before Pelopidas’ death two years earlier. If Nepos’ version of the quote is the correct one, this is an excellent example of how one unsubstantiated story can be amalgamated with another. It also confirms that this aspect of the story is liable to have been falsely placed by the other sources. This mistake may have its origins in Ephorus’ work, though not necessarily, since Nepos certainly had access to it. It

\textsuperscript{1229} Swoboda (1900), 2701; Fortina (1959), 101.
\textsuperscript{1230} E.g. Grote (1872), 333; Buckler (1980a), 218.
\textsuperscript{1231} Swoboda (1900), 2701.
\textsuperscript{1232} Stylianou (1998), 512.
does, however, raise the possibility that he was using a different source from Diodorus. Of course, we are faced with the fact that Nepos does indeed place the quote directly after his account of Mantinea and Epameinondas’ death. But, from a neutral perspective, it would appear that the anecdote was selected not for its historical relevance to Epameinondas’ death, rather, because it illustrates the attitude that he was not concerned with child-rearing since his deeds would live on forever. This may have been the context in which it was originally used, then misused by subsequent writers. Such an origin could be Callisthenic but, since Plutarch makes no use of it, it could be otherwise.

We also find a slight variation in Justin’s account, which finishes its narrative of the Battle of Mantinea by commenting on how it ended as soon as Epameinondas fell. Following this a brief eulogy is given before providing the story of the general’s concern for his shield and his victory (Just. 6. 7. 11-12, 8. 13). The structure of this narrative is rather curious because the story of the death is given only after the eulogy, which would be a reversal of the usual order.\textsuperscript{1233} It is almost as if Justin only decided to include the anecdote at the last minute, while he was writing the eulogy. Perhaps more probable, however, is that it was included since it illustrates an aspect of Epameinondas’ character, i.e. it is biographical. But then its inclusion in the narrative does not quite fit and it may therefore have been taken from something other than Justin/Trogus’ main source material. This is further illustrated when examining the text. It is interesting to note that, after Justin says that the battle ended, he then reports: “After a few days Epameinondas died” (Just. 6. 8. 1).\textsuperscript{1234} This would seem to be a contradiction with the story of his death since the other accounts imply that he died only a short while after the battle. Indeed, the idea that the death occurred a few days later contradicts all of the accounts discussed so far.

Nevertheless, these are not the only traditions that we have concerning the death. In his travels, Pausanias encountered a number of local traditions pertaining to two important details: first, is the identity of Epameinondas’ assassin. Three different versions are presented: the Mantineans say a man of their city named Machaerion was responsible and the

\textsuperscript{1233} In Justin’s own work he describes Philip II’s death followed by a eulogy and, later, the same system is employed for Alexander the Great’s death (Just. 9. 6-8, 12. 15-16). Diodorus also uses this blatantly logical method for the deaths and eulogies of Epameinondas and Pelopidas (Diod. 15. 80-81. 87-88).

\textsuperscript{1234} Post paucos dieinde dies Epaminonda decedit.
Spartans also claim a Machaerion of their own. Pausanias, however, is suspicious of this since no Machaerion had been awarded honours for bravery at these cities. Thus, he prefers the Athenian and Theban version, which designates Gryllus, the Athenian as the killer (Paus. 8. 11. 5-6, 9. 15. 6). The discrepancy is again reflective of the confusion that resulted from the battle, particularly since Gryllus, Xenophon’s son, was almost certainly killed a few days earlier at the cavalry engagement near Mantinea.\(^\text{1235}\)

The solution may be found from Plutarch, who also comments on Epameinondas’ assassin: he says that Dioscorides wrote that a Spartan named Anticrates did the deed. Plutarch adds, probably from his own knowledge of the Spartan tradition, that the descendants of Anticrates were continually honoured with the benefit of tax exemption and that in, his own day, one Callicrates, still enjoyed this privilege. We are told that these descendants are known as machaeriones (swordsmen), since Epameinondas was killed by a sword (Plut. Ages. 35. 1-2). In spite of the discrepancy there may, however, be some level of truth here: it stands to reason that the killer could not have been an Athenian since they were on the left flank; however, the Mantineans and Spartans were on the right, opposing the Boeotians, so it was liable to be either of them. On further examination of the battle it is apparent that the Mantineans did not distinguish themselves; instead they fled quite easily. It was, of course, the Spartans who are depicted as making a solid attempt to push back. Plutarch additionally provides an anecdote indicating that Agesilaus purposefully had Epameinondas targeted during the battle (Plut. Apo. Lac. 75/214c-d). Because of these reasons it is fairly safe to presume that the killer was a Spartan. Furthermore, the Dioscorides that Plutarch cites is most probably the one who was a pupil of Isocrates and wrote a treatise on the constitution of the Spartans (Plut. Lyc. 11. 4; Athen. 1. 18). Since the source is contemporary the assertion that Anticrates was the culprit is highly plausible.

Pausanias’ second detail is the location of Epameinondas’ death. He tells us that Epameinondas was carried from the field, clutching his wound, to a place in view of the battle called Scope (Look), which he tells us, was named so because of these events (Paus. 8. 11. 7).

\(^\text{1235}\) It is apparent that Pausanias, and others (probably the Athenians), believed that the paintings in Mantinea and Athens that depicted Gryllus killing a Theban officer had been later interpreted to depict the actual Battle of Mantinea and the slaying of Epameinondas. See above, 307-308.
The Scope was originally thought to be located at some remains on the eastern side of Mytika, but these are now accepted to belong to a watchtower, which may have actually been called Scope before the battle and the tradition of the site’s name simply reversed the order over subsequent centuries. It has then been argued that Epameinondas did not even die there and that he was not buried at Scope. The tower was surely not the location of the tomb and the general would certainly not have been carried up the heights of the mountain if he was badly wounded. It is, on the other hand, believable that the general, having been wounded was taken part way up Mytika on the lower slopes since he would surely have been nearby. Whether or not he died there is a matter for debate, but we have no reason to doubt that, somewhere in the area Epameinondas was indeed entombed. As Pausanias, who clearly visited the site, says, he was buried on the spot where the two armies met (Paus. 8. 11. 7).

In addition to these details, Pausanias also tells us that Epameinondas had been told by the oracle at Delphi to be aware of pelagos (sea), thus he feared to board either triremes or merchant ships. But instead the oracle was referring to the Pelagos wood by Mytika (Paus. 8. 11. 10; cf. Suda s. v. Ἐπαμεινόνδας). This is obviously another story, like with Scope, that developed after the events. It tells us little of the death but may help to confirm that the site in question is, indeed, around Mytika.

On the whole, Pausanias’ account is essentially the same as the others, i.e. Epameinondas was taken from the field, became aware of the results of the battle and died. However, a potentially significant difference from the other traditions, which have it that he was taken back to camp instead, Grote noted that a camp was not liable to have been actually established since they had only left Tegea a few hours earlier, though a tent could have been erected; especially for the general. However, it may also be possible that, since neither side was willing to admit defeat, the army pitched camp and stayed in the vicinity for

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1236 E.g. Leake (1830b), 82.
1238 Loring (1895), 82-83
1239 Mayer and Mowat (2018), 464 n. 70, based on Loring (1895), 82-83.
1240 Plut. Reg. Imp. Apo. 71. 24/194c; Diod. 15. 87. 5; Just. 6. 7. 13.
1241 Grote (1872), 333 n. 4.
Having examined all of the traditions in some detail, it may be possible to reconstruct a plausible account of Epameinondas’ death. After being wounded by a Spartan soldier named Anticrates the general was taken from the field, perhaps somewhere along the lower slopes on the southern side of Mytika. Though he may have inquired about his shield, he most probably did not make any comment about Leuctra and Mantinea being his daughters. On the other hand, from the alternate tradition, the statement concerning the dead Theban officers is believable as it illustrates the military mind of the dying general. It is also possible that his lovers, Asopichus and Caphisodorus, had fallen during the battle and would be buried nearby. After the battle it is apparent that the army pitched a camp in the vicinity. This would be the easiest way to treat the wounded, rather than carry them the two hour walk back to Tegea and potentially risk worsening their condition on the journey. It was therefore practical to have all available physicians nearby. Thus, a tent was probably constructed for Epameinondas on the site. We are also given the interesting possibility that the general did not die until after a few days had passed. If we were to also accept Plutarch’s statement about the machaeriones being so named since Epameinondas was killed by a sword, this contradicts the standard tradition that he was stabbed by a spear or javelin. Accepting this interpretation offers a much less heroic and more realistic version of Epameinondas’ death, that probably finds its origins in Callisthenes or Theopompus (or both).

Thus, the great Theban general was finally laid to rest. His tomb had to be erected at the public’s expense, since, at his house, only one iron coin was found (Plut. Fab. 27. 2). He was buried, along with many others of his kin and allies, around the spot where the Mantineans and Spartans had fled upon the onslaught of the Boeotian left wing. To commemorate his grave, a pillar was built on it depicting a shield with a dragon in relief, indicating his relation to the Spartoi. It bore two inscriptions on it: one, an original in

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1242 Asopichus is elsewhere mentioned as Epameinondas’ lover in Theopompus FGrH 115 F 247 = Athen. 13.604f-605a, see Morison BNJ 115 F 247. He apparently had his shield emblazoned with an image of the Leuctra monument. It was subsequently displayed in the stoa at Delphi.
Boeotian dialect, and another, which was later added by the emperor Hadrian (Paus. 8. 11. 10). It is quite possible that the Boeotian inscription resembled the inscription on the statue of Epameinondas that was set up in the agora of Thebes sometime after his death:

By my will, Sparta was stricken from its glory,
Sacred Messene now receives its children.
By Theban implement Megalopolis was encircled,
Thus, all of Greece is autonomous and free.\textsuperscript{1243}

\begin{quote}
\hellenic{ἡ μετέραις Βουλαίς Σπάρτη μὲν ἐκείρατο δόξαν, Μεσσήνη δ᾽ ἱερὴ τέκνα χρόνῳ δέχεται: Θήβης δ᾽ ὁπλοσιν Μεγάλη πόλις ἐστεφάνωται, αὐτόνομος δ᾽ Ἑλλάς πᾶσ᾽ ἐν ἑλευθερίῃ (Paus. 9. 15. 6). For the site of the statue see Paus. 9. 12. 3, 6.}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{1243} ἡμετέραις βουλαίς Σπάρτη μὲν ἐκείρατο δόξαν, Μεσσήνη δ᾽ ἱερὴ τέκνα χρόνῳ δέχεται: Θήβης δ᾽ ὁπλοσιν Μεγάλη πόλις ἐστεφάνωται, αὐτόνομος δ᾽ Ἑλλάς πᾶσ᾽ ἐν ἑλευθερίῃ (Paus. 9. 15. 6). For the site of the statue see Paus. 9. 12. 3, 6.
Conclusion

The Aftermath of Mantinea

In the period directly following Epameinondas’ death Xenophon famously stated that, since both sides claimed victory at Mantinea, “even more confusion and disorder in Greece emerged after the battle than before” (Xen. Hell. 7. 5. 27). In many ways this is true: in the early 350s Athens would be severely weakened by the Social War and Philip of Macedon began to extend his influence into Thessaly and the northern Aegean. However, Xenophon’s assertion seems to stem from an Athenian point of view and does not necessarily represent the situation for much of mainland Greece.

Within a year of Epameinondas’ death (362/1), a general peace was concluded by all states except for the Spartans, who were still unwilling to recognize the autonomy of the Messenians. By implication the Common Peace, like the previous two treaties in 367 and 366/5, recognized the Boeotian League as its guarantor and the leading city-state in mainland Greece. Indeed, the league continued, at this stage, to function as hegemon of the federal alliance: in the following year (361/0), turmoil in the territory of Megalopolis resulted in Thebes sending 3,000 soldiers led by Pammenes. While this may imply some instability within the Peloponnesus, the campaign was successful and, as Diodorus indicates, the internal strife was alleviated. Following this incident, most of the states in the Peloponnesus would play no further role in the major conflicts of the coming decade. Sparta would provide some monetary support to Phocias at the beginning of the Phocian War, but it ceased its interference in the affairs of the Peloponnesian states for 10 years. Indeed, when the Spartans did attack Megalopolis in 352, the Boeotian-Peloponnesian alliance proved its continuance when assistance from Boeotia, Argos, Messenia, Sicyon and elsewhere in Arcadia supplied troops to support the endangered polis. In the following year

\[1244\] \[\text{\textit{Δκρισία δὲ καὶ ταραχὴ ἐτὶ πλείων μετὰ τὴν μάχην ἐγένετο ἢ πρόσθεν ἐν τῇ Ἑλλάδι.}}\]
\[1245\] Diod. 15. 89. 1-2, 94. 1; Plut. Ages. 35. 2-4; Polyb. 4. 33. On the Common Peace of 362/1, see Ryder (1965), 84-86, 140-144; Jehne (1994), 96-115.
\[1246\] Diod. 15. 94. 1-3. For Pammenes intervention in Megalopolis see Dusanic (1970), 307-308.
\[1247\] Though Achaea sent 1,500 troops to support Phocis, they played no significant role (Diod. 16. 30. 4).
Sparta again attacked Megalopolis and, again, Boeotian troops were sent, this time proving their effectiveness. It is clear from these events that the federal alliance that had been established by Epameinondas and his followers in 370, still functioned effectively as an anti-Spartan institution with Thebes at least nominally as its hegemon. The defensive ring that Epameinondas helped to establish through the territories of Messenia, Megalopolis, Tegea and Argos, continued to bar the Spartans from regaining any territory they had lost in the past two decades.\textsuperscript{1248}

Elsewhere, in the early 350s, the Boeotian League did concede some loss when Athens regained its influence in Euboea (357). The Theban assembly also appears to have lost interest in Thessaly, thus allowing the Pheraean tyrants to reassert themselves and ultimately attract the attention of Philip. In spite of this, in 360/59, Thebes was made \textit{promanteia} of the city of Delphi, which denoted the responsibility of protecting the sanctuary. This honour had been awarded to the Spartans in the previous century and now provided clear evidence for which polis the Amphictyons considered the most powerful. Then, in 356, Philomelos, instigated the Phocian War by seizing Delphi. Boeotia would then become embroiled in a ten-year struggle that would significantly reduce its manpower and economy. It was this event that truly ended the period of Theban supremacy, but it would take nearly the entire war for this to be fully realized. In fact, their conduct during the war was generally militarily apt, thereby conceding only a handful of losses to the Phocians. However, the seemingly endless supply of funds that the Phocians had access to allowed them to continue to fight in spite of losses that would normally have crippled other poleis. But the Boeotian League pushed on until 347 when it was forced to request help from Philip. The alliance with Macedon facilitated the end of the war in 346 and, much to the dismay of the Athenians, allowed Philip to subsequently assert influence in central and southern Greece. Though Boeotia was desperate by that stage, unknown to them, the sacred treasury at Delphi had been depleted and it was only a matter of time before the Phocians would have had to surrender. If the Thebans knew of this, it is possible that they would not have been so eager to obtain Macedonian help.\textsuperscript{1249}

\textsuperscript{1248} On these events see Buckler (1989), 87-92, 97-98.
\textsuperscript{1249} On the Phocian War see Buckler (1989).
It is clear from this overview of subsequent events that the period of Theban supremacy, or the Theban Hegemony, did not truly finish until towards the end of the Phocian War and the eclipse of Macedonian power. But the idea that Epameinondas’ death signalled the end of the period of Theban supremacy is widespread throughout literature, both ancient and modern.\footnote{Ephorus \textit{FGrH} 70 F 119 = Strabo 9. 2. 2, 5; Polyb. 6. 43. 1-7; Just. 6. 8. 1-2; Diod. 15. 79. 2, 88. 3-4. In modern scholarship, see e.g. Buckler (1980a), 219; see above, 3, and below, 339.} It is true that the Thebans did not exploit their advantage and attempt to force Sparta into a settlement; thus, official hostility would continue. However, this contention can be misleading since, other than the general’s death, the Battle of Mantinea neither brought major loss or gains to the Boeotian League. If, in any way, we can call it a major turning point, it is because the Common Peace recognized Messenia’s independence by all the Greek city-states (except Sparta). But, in reality, it would be a very long time before Sparta would give up hope of regaining its lost territory.

\textit{A Grand Strategy?}

The question of what Epameinondas hoped to ultimately achieve during his career cannot be certainly determined. It is possible, however, to observe a certain trend in his activities. From 378 to 371, he was not likely to have seriously entertained any grandiose schemes beyond the defence of Thebes and the re-establishment of the Boeotian League. After Leuctra and the suggestion from the Arcadians to invade Sparta it was then almost suddenly conceivable that Spartan power could be dramatically reduced. While the liberation of Messenia and the founding of Messene can generally be credited to Epameinondas and his followers, his involvement in the synoecisms of Mantinea and Megalopolis was probably limited to assistance in facilitating the construction of each city’s fortifications. It has often been thought that Epameinondas himself envisioned and implemented the idea of forming a defensive ring around Sparta with these cities and others; however, it is more likely that the plan was developed by a number of parties as the events between 371 and 369 unfolded.\footnote{On Epameinondas’ alleged Peloponnesian plan see Demand (1990), 107-119, for discussion and bibliography.}
Throughout the 360s, though Epameinondas struggled to maintain and enhance Theban influence in the Peloponnese, the federation dramatically expanded throughout central and northern Greece, including defensive alliances with the cities of Phocis and Locris. Pelopidas also managed to gain authority and prestige in Thessaly and Macedonia. It is uncertain what Epameinondas’ views on Thebes’ northern policy were likely to be since his participation there was limited to securing Pelopidas’ release from captivity in Pherae. But there is no reason to doubt his adherence, since Pelopidas was his friend and political ally. In 366, on the third invasion of the Peloponnesus, Epameinondas secured the important port of Naupactus, in the Corinthian Gulf. This act may have been connected with the announcement at Thebes, probably in the same year, that he intended to build a navy. The acquisition of Oropus, another significant port, may also be connected to this. In 364 this very navy set out on an expedition with the intention of bringing the major powers of the Aegean into the federal alliance. It is therefore apparent that Epameinondas hoped to achieve a ring of defence (or offense) around Athens that, like the Spartans, would cripple Athenian capacity to wage war.

Though Epameinondas’ scheme for the reduction of Athens would not be fulfilled it is clear that he envisioned a large network of federal alliances throughout mainland Greece and the Aegean under the leadership of the Boeotian League. If he had survived his final battle it is possible that Boeotian foreign policy would have continued to aggressively manifest and maintain such a network. However, after his death, it is apparent that more moderate parties overtook the majority in the assembly and discontinued a number of Epameinondas’ policies.

Concluding Statements

It can be said that Epameinondas was unquestionably a first rate general, arguably the best of his day. Though he was not perfect, particularly in his largely unsuccessful attempts at siege warfare, his ability to rally and utilize his forces in the field was masterly. At Leuctra he demonstrated his excellent use of tactics to overcome the power of the Spartan phalanx and the invasion of Sparta in 370/69 proved him a capable strategist as he managed
to successfully capitalize on his previous victory. This, indeed, is what Thebes afterwards lacked during the Phocian War since, though they would gain a number of victories, they failed each time to take advantage of their success. Overall, we cannot be certain, if at all, how much Epameinondas’ generalship influenced the development of warfare. We have some reason to believe that, during his three year sojourn in Thebes, Philip learned a great deal from the likes of Epameinondas and his followers. Unfortunately, it is not possible to establish the true extent of this or even if it occurred at all. However, this does not mean that, militarily, he had no effect on future generals. In fact, writers throughout history have eulogized Epameinondas as the epitome of a virtuous military leader.\footnote{See Appendix I.}

By contrast, as a politician, he was somewhat lacklustre, partly due to his inability to satisfy the needs of both his allies and the assembly back home. He was, however, certainly constrained by the federal alliance’s lack of the required constitutional machinery that would recognize Thebes as its leader and allow them to arbitrate disputes.\footnote{Buckler (1980a), 222-224.} But it is clear that he was both an excellent orator and a man of vision who was capable of entrancing and winning over an audience. Despite his political failures, when viewed in tandem, it is apparent that he was usually successful in persuading his fellow Thebans and his opponents in the assembly never managed to fully reverse Epameinondan policy while he was still alive.

Ultimately it is pointless to suggest that Thebes’ chance at hegemony ended with Epameinondas’ death since we simply cannot know if he would have fared any better in the Phocian War than did his successors,\footnote{Cawkwell (1972), 274-275.} though we can perhaps suggest that, in the oncoming struggle against Philip, a similar personality to the late Theban general, may have been what was required to combat Macedonian ascendency. Nevertheless, Epameinondas should hardly be judged for what he failed to achieve or what occurred in the wake of his demise; rather, he should be appreciated for the significant imprint and enduring legacy he left in Greek history, namely the reduction of Spartan power and the liberation of Messenia. These actions resulted in major transformations throughout mainland Greece. When Epameinondas finally met his end, the nature of Greek power politics bore a distinctly
different character from what it had some 20 years earlier and he should certainly be credited with influencing this change greatly.

To conclude, we may question whether Epameinondas deserves to be called ‘Great’ as Plutarch and Montaigne thought, and as the title of this thesis suggests. His achievements may appear small by comparison to the vast empires that Alexander and Caesar would build; however, Epameinondas is without a doubt the most outstanding military figure from the period in which he was active.
Appendix I: The Legacy and Reception of Epameinondas

Following his death, the figure of Epameinondas has been represented by a number of different works of art and literature. These basically occurred in at least three main phases: first, in the period following his death, i.e. the mid to late fourth century; second, throughout the Roman era; third, from the Renaissance to the late nineteenth century. To this we may also add the small but potential re-emergence of interest in the general in recent decades. In each of these phases it is apparent that aspects of his character appealed to various audiences, generally erudite ones, though this would begin to change towards the end of the Renaissance. The following narrative is a survey of the various ways in which Epameinondas has been received and presented throughout history. While many of the works and themes that are examined below would merit their own dedicated studies, the present discussion is intended to establish the overall trend up to the modern day. 1255

Late Classical and Hellenistic Greece

In Epameinondas’ time and for a while after his death it is apparent that the general was something of a topic of conversation for people throughout the Greek world. His political and military influence had affected the entirety of mainland Greece, most of the Aegean, and as far eastward as the Black Sea. In spite of this, extant references to the late general, from the middle of the fourth century, are far less common than would perhaps be expected. The earliest references we have are from Xenophon who wrote his Hellenica in the 350s, though the Laconophile omits most of the Theban’s activities and makes a point of emphasizing his failures. Within another two decades, however, the historians Ephorus, Callisthenes, Theopompus and Anaximenes all certainly wrote in some detail on Epameinondas. These writers all composed their work around the time of, or shortly after, the later reign of Philip II. The tradition that emerged from Ephorus and Callisthenes is highly eulogistic of the Theban general.

1255 A number of the following ancient writers are covered in Chapters 1 and 2.
Outside of the genre of history, there are only a handful of references. Aristotle refers to the philosopher leaders of Thebes, which surely includes Epameinondas and Pelopidas, but it is uncertain why their names are not given since he undoubtedly knew of them (Aristot. Rhet. 2. 23. 11). Our earliest explicit reference comes from Aeschines in On the Embassy (c. 343) and then, around 324, Dinarchus, in his Against Demosthenes, offers praise for the achievements of Epameinondas and Pelopidas (Aeschin. 2. 105; Din. 1. 72-73). This is a stark contrast from the earlier criticism of Theban activity during the period by Isocrates, particularly in his Plataicus and Archidamus. When Dinarchus wrote his extant speeches in 324, it is clear that Athenian attitudes to the Theban leaders of the previous generation had substantially altered. This is probably due to the latent alliance Athens had with Thebes and its unyielding resistance against Macedonian aggression. Indeed, Plutarch states that Demosthenes used Epameinondas as a model to inspire resistance to Philip (Plut. Dem. 20. 1). This representation may have influenced the historical writing of the period.

It is also conspicuous that Epameinondas is absent from the work of Aeneas Tacticus, who was writing sometime in the latter half of the fourth century. His account of events that the general was involved in are detailed, even mentioning the Theban officer, Pammenes. However, Aeneas’ extant work is concerned with surviving under siege warfare: Epameinondas was never amongst the besieged and was generally unwilling or unsuccessful in siege warfare. He may therefore have never merited mention in this part of his work. After this, there is not a single extant reference to Epameinondas until Polybius, whose work was written in the late second century. Polybius was from Megalopolis, the construction of which has often been credited to the Theban, and he provides extensive commentary on several fourth century historians. It is therefore unsurprising that he held some interest in the general.

The Roman Period

By the first century and the eclipse of Roman power a fresh interest in the Theban is apparent. From historians there were glorifying accounts from Pompeius Trogus and Diodorus Siculus. Cornelius Nepos wrote a short but sharp biography, which was one of his
longest pieces. He was, in addition, known to have written a universal history, which may have included some account of the Theban Hegemony. We also find Epameinondas mentioned in other genres such as in Strabo’s Geography, in which he clearly made use of Ephorus. Plutarch also tells us that Cato held the general in high esteem (Plut. Cat. Ma. 8. 8). Significantly, the great orator, Cicero, makes several references to him in his speeches, letters, and philosophical work. He even goes as far as to refer to Epameinondas as the greatest of all of the Greeks (Cic. Fin. 2. 19). This indicates a fairly general acceptance in the Roman world of the Theban’s historical significance.

In the following three centuries we are witness to what appears to have been the absolute high point for ancient interest and praise of Epameinondas. In the first century A.D. he is mentioned by Pliny the Elder, Frontinus and Valerius Maximus. In particular the famed politician and biographer, Plutarch, wrote one of his first Lives on the general. With well over 50 extant references, it is more than apparent that Epameinondas was one of his favourite figures. Though, when one considers that Plutarch was a native Boeotian, this comes as little surprise. In the second century A.D. there are numerous references from the tactical writers of the period (i.e. Polyaenus, Aelianus Tacticus and Arrian) and in the philosophical work of Epictetus and the rhetoric of Aristides. We even have evidence that the emperor Hadrian visited Epameinondas’ grave near Mantinea and wrote his own inscription. There is something of a continuance of this in the third century A.D. as he is mentioned a number of times by Claudius Aelianus, Diogenes Laertes, Athenaeus and Justin (whose dates are uncertain). By the fourth century he is only found once in Themistius and once in Ammianus Marcellinus.

From this brief assessment it is apparent that, during the Roman period, Epameinondas sparked a great deal of interest throughout the Graeco-Roman world. A large amount of respect was afforded to the likes of someone who was such an adept general but at

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1256 Cic. Off. 1. 84, 155; Tusc. 1. 2, 15, 45, 49, 2. 17, 24; Fam. 5. 21. 5; Fin. 2. 19, 21, 30, 97; Inv. 1. 33, 38-39; Div. 1. 74;
1258 Ael. Tac. Tact. 47. 3-5; Arr. Tact. 11. 1-3; Epictetus Disc. 3. 22; Arist. 9. 46, 10. 16, 11. 53, 28. 88, 148.
1259 See above, 327-328.
1260 Ael. Var. Hist. 2. 43, 3. 17, 4. 8, 4. 16, 5. 5, 7. 14, 11. 9, 12. 3, 12. 43, 13. 42; Athen. 5. 84, 11. 10, 13. 58, 78, 83, 14. 64;
1261 Themist. 7. 88c; Amm. 25. 3. 8.
the same time humble and without any apparent desire for personal wealth or gain. The writers of this period had a particular interest in his achievements in battle and the heroic accounts of his death.

*From the Middle Ages to the Renaissance*

Following this there is no further extant reference to the general for several hundred years. Indeed, while some may exist that have not been noted by scholars, we have only the five mentions of Epameinondas in the *Suda*, from the tenth century, and a brief mention of praise by Michael Psellus the Byzantine monk from the eleventh century (Psellus *Chronographica* 6. 163). Other than this we have no known mention of the Theban from all of Western Europe during the Mediaeval period. The most obvious explanation of this is that from about the fourth century A.D. there had begun a major decline in the knowledge of ancient Greek; thus, knowledge of ancient Greek culture was acquired primarily through Latin texts.\(^\text{1262}\) Since no Latin writers were known to have written an account of Epameinondas (except Nepos’ short *Life*) or the period in which he lived the absolute majority of people in Western Europe did not have access to significant information on the general save through the few references made in Latin, as highlighted above.\(^\text{1263}\) We may have expected more from the Byzantines whose classical Greek education continued and, as indicated in the *Suda*, they continued to have access to copies of Ephorus, Callisthenes and Theopompus, though perhaps not for long (or many of them). But, it seems that, more often than not, the Byzantines maintained a Thucydidean ideology of writing history in that they focused on the history of their own time, particularly since the more distant past had already been recorded.\(^\text{1264}\)

After Psellus no known reference to Epameinondas has been found until the sixteenth century. This is hardly surprising given the rise in Greek language as part of the

\(^{1262}\) Copeland (2016), 3-4.

\(^{1263}\) A good comparison of this can be seen in the Medieval reception of Alexander the Great, who, in Western Europe, was mainly read about through the Latin work of Curtius Rufus, while the Byzantines more readily had the likes of Plutarch, Diodorus and Arrian at their disposal, see Jouanno (2018), 449-476.

\(^{1264}\) For an introduction on Byzantine historiography see Neville (2018).
curriculum toward the end of the fifteenth century, along with the establishment of the printing press. We thus find a dramatic increase in Latin and vernacular translations of the likes of Plato, Xenophon, Plutarch, etc. Epameinondas himself may have taken somewhat longer than other figures to capture the interest of scholars since, by this time, Plutarch’s *Epameinondas*, along with other major works depicting the general had been completely lost. This therefore made the Theban a relatively inaccessible topic except for those well versed in Diodorus and the miscellaneous references in the works of Plutarch. In spite of this, by the middle of the Renaissance evidence of interest in the general begins to show itself. The Italian diplomat and political theorist Niccolò Machiavelli in his political treatise entitled *The Prince* (1513), says that, once Epameinondas had died, the Thebans gave their army to Philip II, who, in turn stole their liberty.\textsuperscript{1265}

More significant is the Dutch scholar, Desiderius Erasmus’ (1466-1536) representation of anecdotal material in his *Apophthegmata*, first published in 1531. The work was originally dedicated to the fifteen-year old Prince William of Cleves (1516-1592), the future duke of Jülich-Cleves-Berge (1539). In his dedicatory epistle he indicates that it was intended as an easily accessible guide for the moral instruction of young boys, especially princes. It appears to have been quite successful as it was republished twice in 1531 and again in both 1532 and 1535. Epameinondas’ representation in Plutarch, and to a lesser extent, Nepos, adhered to many of the qualities Erasmus deemed laudatory such as discipline, patriotism and constant vigilance. Indeed, Plutarch’s depiction was most important to Erasmus who believed that, “of all the Greek writers, Plutarch is the most saintly and the most worth reading, especially in the area of moral instruction”.\textsuperscript{1266} However, Epameinondas’ ranking as one of the foremost of all ancient figures appears to be lacking in Erasmus: the first two books consisted only of anecdotes concerning the Spartans, mainly from Plutarch’s *Apophthegmata Laconica*, followed, in book three, by a focus on Greek Philosophers. This was balanced out, in book four, by famous generals, Greek and Roman: Philip, Alexander, Antigonus, Augustus, Julius Caesar and Pompey. The majority of his anecdotes here come from the *Regum et Imperatorum Apophthegmata* in which the section on Epameinondas is the third largest, next to Philip and Alexander’s. Erasmus would not write on the Theban general

\textsuperscript{1265} Machiavelli (1905), 304.
\textsuperscript{1266} Knott and Fantham (2014), 9.
until his fifth book, which he did not initially intend to write. This suggests that Erasmus was not fully aware of Epameinondas’ historical significance, though he clearly praised what he did know. This is partly due the probability that Erasmus did not have access to Diodorus’ book 15 and therefore had insufficient information to fully understand the Theban in his historical context. However, in spite of this, Erasmus’ brief comments on the anecdotal material demonstrate genuine admiration for the obscure general. Erasmus wrote his *Apophthegmata* in the first couple decades of the Reformation and, as a moderate Roman Catholic, was surely deeply concerned about the future of Christendom. This would explain his interest in the moral welfare of future rulers in Europe.\(^{1267}\) This generally didactic agenda would be a common feature in depictions of Epameinondas for the following two centuries.

Within half a century, Michel de Montaigne, one of the foremost thinkers of the late sixteenth century, expressed, for the first time since antiquity, a genuine affection for the Theban general in his *Essays* published between 1570 and 1592. This is most strikingly apparent in his essay, *On the most excellent of men*, in which he ranks Homer, Alexander the Great and Epameinondas as the three most excellent men in history. Montaigne, however, appears to rate the latter above the rest, referring to him as the most “distinguished” of the three and heaps praise upon his moral virtues: “as for his morals… he far surpassed… all those who have ever engaged in state”. Later, in his *On the useful and the honourable*, Epameinondas is lauded as a heroic model, worthy of emulation. He was praised over the likes of Alexander and Caesar, not so much for his achievements but for his paradigmatic virtue.\(^{1268}\) Like Erasmus, most of his information probably came from Plutarch and Nepos but he also may have used Erasmus’ *Apophthegmata*, which was widely available and read in Montaigne’s time. Once again, there is no indication that Montaigne had access to Diodorus and his presentation of Epameinondas is almost entirely influenced by that of Plutarch’s.

The works of Plutarch had become much more widely accessible in the sixteenth century, particularly due to Amyot’s French translations of the *Lives* and the collected *Moralia* in 1572. On these works, Montaigne wrote, “It seems to me that I am justified in

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\(^{1267}\) Erasmus had previously dedicated a similar work to the future Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V, entitled *The Education of a Christian Prince* (1516). On Erasmus’ *Apophthegmata* see Knott and Fantham (2014).

\(^{1268}\) Translated in Screech (1991), 850-857, 891-906.
awarding the palm, above all our writers in French, to Jacques Amyot, not merely for the simplicity and purity of his language in which he excels all others, nor for his constancy during such a long piece of work, nor for the profundity of his knowledge in being able to disentangle an author so complex and thorny... but above all I am grateful to him for having chosen and selected so worthy and so appropriate a book to present to his country”. Montaigne admits to us that he himself cannot read the original Greek; therefore, he was extremely happy to have access to Amyot’s translation, which became enormously successful and influential.¹²⁶⁹

Toward the end of the century this influence made its way across the channel into England when Thomas North began translating Plutarch into English from Amyot’s French. The first two editions of these were published in 1579 and 1595 and it is clear that they had a widespread appeal. This is perhaps most distinctively apparent in the fact that North’s translations were the major source material for three of Shakespeare’s plays.¹²⁷⁰ However, more important for this study was North’s 1602 edition, which included a number of Lives on figures that Plutarch had either never done or were no longer extant such as Philip, Dionysus of Sicily and Augustus. The first of these, given the prime position, is a Life of Epameinondas.¹²⁷¹ This work was mostly assembled from Plutarch, Nepos and Diodorus and it may be considered the first attempt, since antiquity, to reconstruct the life of the Theban. It is also the first of a number of works that were intended to remedy the lamentable loss of Plutarch’s Life of Epameinondas. This would have pleased Montaigne to no end, had he still been alive, as he had previously expressed his grief over the loss.¹²⁷² By 1614, Sir Walter Raleigh published his incomplete universal history, which included a brief section on Epameinondas and the Theban ascendancy. Like Erasmus’ Apophthegmata, Raleigh’s History of the World was intended to educate the ruling class; in this case, it was dedicated to Henry, the Prince of Wales.¹²⁷³ It was also read by James I who, however, accused it of being anti-monarchical.¹²⁷⁴

¹²⁶⁹ Screech (1991), 408.
¹²⁷⁰ In Julius Caesar, Coriolanus and Antony and Cleopatra.
¹²⁷¹ North and Goulart (1602), 1-18.
¹²⁷² Screech (1991), 856.
¹²⁷³ Raleigh (1687).
¹²⁷⁴ Quoted in Hall (1987), 55.
It is apparent that a reasonable proportion of educated people throughout England read these works and would therefore have been reasonably aware of Epameinondas. Certainly both Goulart and Raleigh were extremely impressed with the Theban’s virtuous manner and were happy to reiterate the general praise he received throughout antiquity. A continuance of this trend can be detected half a century later when Samuel Clarke, a nonconformist puritan clergyman published a Parallel Life of Epameinondas paired with Hannibal. Clarke was a prolific writer in the genres of biography and martyrology, publishing a number of works detailing the lives of godly people. These were largely compiled by excerpting whole sections from eulogies and other such texts. However, the purpose of these lives was not to write literary masterpieces but, instead, to provide models of how a devout Christian should live. It is not too hard to trace his influences back to Erasmus who was a purveyor of the idea that the life of a virtuous person can be used didactically. This was taken up in England by the martyrologist, John Foxe (1516-1587), who wrote the famous Actes and Monuments (also known as Foxe’s Book of Martyrs), published in English in 1563. Foxe determined that the use of Lives as a means of preaching and displaying good character, as Collinson asserts, is “more persuasive than doctrine”. Foxe’s writing became enormously influential, particularly for its depictions of Catholic persecution of Protestants. Thus, in the seventeenth century, Clarke continued this tradition; mostly focusing on people that had lived since the Reformation. But between 1664 and 1665 Clarke, albeit briefly, altered his scope to include Parallel Lives on figures that are called ‘Great’, i.e. Nebuchadnezzar II with Cyrus, Alexander with Charlemagne, Pompey with Artaxerxes and Julius Caesar with Augustus.

The Life of Epameinondas and Hannibal appears to have been one of the last of Clarke’s delvings into ancient history. The material mostly comes from Plutarch, Nepos and Diodorus and in many sections the wording is so similar to Goulart’s version that it is apparent that the latter may have been Clarke’s major source for material on the Theban. A conspicuous example of this is the assertion of both Goulart and Clarke that Epameinondas had a serpent shaped tattoo. This belief probably comes from the second century A.D.

1275 Two previous Latin editions had been published on the continent in 1554 and 1559.
1277 On Foxe and his work see Haller (1963).
1278 North and Goulart (1602), 1; Clarke (1665), 67.
text, *Fabulae*, attributed to Hyginus in which it is stated that Creon recognized his grandson at Thebes since he bore the mark of Dracon’s progeny, i.e. the Spartoi (Hygin. *Fab. 72*). Such an assertion in relation to the Theban general has not been made since these two works. Unlike Raleigh and North, Clarke’s writings would not be republished after his death; however, in his final publication, he wrote that “never less than a thousand” of each book was printed for any given edition. This suggests a reasonably wide readership and, since Clarke probably did not intend to turn a profit, the books were liable to be relatively affordable.

**The Enlightenment Epameinondas**

By the eighteenth century, interest in the Theban general was no longer almost entirely influenced by Plutarch; however, his representation would continue to be strikingly didactic. In France the century saw the beginnings of more recognizably academic works on the general, most importantly in Seran de la Tour’s *Histoire d’Epaminondas, général des Thébains*, published in 1739 to complement his 1732 history of Scipio. However, outside the purely academic, the figure of the general, started to impose itself more prominently in other genres and mediums. We thus find a number of artistic depictions of Epameinondas.

One of the earliest visual representations we find is *The Death of Epaminondas* (1726) by the Dutch painter Isaac Walraven (1686-1765) (Fig. 1). This stirring image attempts to capture the despair of the general’s companions in his last moments as he enquires about his shield and whether or not the battle was won. It was originally intended to be coupled with a work entitled *Lycurgus showing the young Charilaus to the Spartan military leaders*, which was unfortunately never completed. The pair may have been intended to comment on the political discord in the Dutch Republic at the time. But, even so, the

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1279 Plutarch does mention a birthmark in relation to the Sparti, but says that it was spear shaped, which is also iterated by the scholia on Hyginus (Plut. *De Sera*. 21/563a-b; Schol. Hygin. *Fab. 72*).
1280 Clarke (1683), 1-2.
1281 On Enlightenment French academic interest on Epameinondas, see above, 3-4.
1282 Krul (2018), 157-188.
heroic nature of the death, as presented in the ancient literature, provided the western world with a model of paradigmatic virtue that would continue to be utilized well into the nineteenth century.

Among the more conspicuous of these is a *Death of Epaminondas* (1773) by the British American, Benjamin West (1738-1820), who was amongst the most prominent painters of his day (Fig. 2). In terms of subject matter it appears fairly similar to Walraven’s: Epameinondas is lying outside his tent with a spear tip sticking out of his ribs; his followers despair as he requests his shield to be brought to him and asks if they were victorious. However, it is unlikely that West ever saw, let alone knew about the earlier work; rather, the virtuous death was a popular topic for historical painters during the period. Indeed, it has been noted that West probably drew his inspiration from Charles Rollin’s account of the Theban ascendency in his *Ancient History* (1738), in which the frontispiece, by Hubert Gravelot, depicts a remarkably similar engraving of an Epameinondas death. West’s version was commissioned by King George III and was intended to complement his most famous painting, *The Death of General Wolfe* (1770). This depicted the death of James Wolfe who died in the moment of victory at the Battle of the Plain of Abraham in 1759 (Fig. 3). After having been shot three times and being informed of the state of the battle, Wolfe gave his final orders before succumbing to his wounds. The similarity between Wolfe and Epameinondas was not original but had before been observed in early accounts of the battle. As part of this complement, in 1772, West also painted *The Death of the Chevalier Bayard*, depicting the demise of Pierre Terrail, seigneur de Bayard (1473-1524) at the Battle of the Sesia River (Fig. 4). Unlike the other two, Bayard did not die at the moment of victory, since it was a decisive defeat for the Kingdom of France. However, Bayard, showed a similar courage in the face of death and, throughout his life conducted himself in a comparably virtuous manner to Epameinondas. Both the *Bayard* and the *Epameinondas* are strikingly similar, using almost exactly the same colour and composition: when viewed side-by-side it becomes apparent that the two paintings were designed to mirror one another. Interestingly, both of these generals are depicted as younger men (both were in their 50s when they died).

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1283 On Epameinondas’ death see above, 321-328.
1284 On Rollin, see above, 4. For Wolfe’s use of Gravelot’s work, see Walsh (1967), 123-126, fig. 3, for a reproduction of Gravelot’s *Epaminondas*.
1285 Pringle (1760), 29-30; Knox (1769), 79.
This was presumably done in order to more adequately present the two fallen soldiers as similar to the younger James Wolfe. These paintings not only show the eighteenth century fascination with the virtuous death, but also illustrate the inclination to equate modern events with the past.\footnote{Erffa and Staley (1986), 65-68, 165-166, 203. West also painted (c. 1799), another, smaller, \textit{Death of Epaminondas}, together with a \textit{Death} of both Chevalier Bayard and Sir Philip Sydney.}

The general’s image was also produced in other mediums, particularly that of the statue of Epameinondas at Stowe House in the Temple of Ancient Virtue by Peter Scheemakers (1691-1781). Peter was a Belgian sculptor from Antwerp who had inherited a lucrative workshop from his father, before coming to London in 1720.\footnote{On Scheemakers life and works see Roscoe (1999), 163-304.} The colonnaded rotunda, known as the Temple of Ancient Virtue, was designed in 1734 by William Kent (1685-1748), who was the architect of a number of buildings at Stowe house. In 1737, Scheemaker was commissioned to sculpt four statues of ‘Ancient Worthies’: Homer, Socrates, Lycurgus and Epameinondas (Fig. 5). These were all mounted in the temple and included Latin inscriptions for each ancient figure: \textit{Epaminondas, cujus a virtute, prudentia, verecundia, Thebanorum respublica, Libertatem fimul & impérium, Difciplinam bellicam, civilem & domesticam, Accepit; Eoque amíffo, perdidit.}\footnote{“Whose courage, prudence, and moderation gave liberty and empire, an happy establishment, as well civil as military, to the ‘Theban Commonwealth’: translation in Roscoe (1999), 284.} A contemporary commentator (Bickham) presumed a wide public recognition of such illustrious figures, proclaiming that these men “made Virtue their only pursuit”.\footnote{Bickham (1750), 24-29.} It is possible that the virtue and tragedy of the deaths of Socrates, Lycurgus and Epameinondas, were meant to create a comparison with the contemporary English state, particularly with the ‘First Minister’, Robert Walpole.\footnote{Roscoe (1999), 284-285, fig. 93 (the original designs).}

During the Enlightenment there were at least two plays written on the subject of Epameinondas: the first of these, entitled, \textit{Epaminondas: Drama} (1774), which was written in Latin by one P. Giovanni Spinello, who was apparently a professor of literature at the University of Naples. Almost nothing is known of this obscure work but, since it was subsequently translated into Italian, we can presume there was some demand for its performance. Another play, by one Monsieur Deschamps Marquis, called \textit{Epaminondas:}
Tragédie en Cinq Actes & en Vers (1771). This work is a dramatization of the trial(s) of Epameinondas in 369 after his first and second invasions of the Peloponnesus (the two events are amalgamated into one). It depicts Epameinondas and Pelopidas as both lovers of the république and enemies of tyranny. It also emphasizes the unjust nature of the accusations, since their actions benefited the state. We are thus presented with the theme that service to state is the highest of virtues. Unfortunately, since the authors of these works are obscure it is difficult to ascertain any kind of cultural or political context; however, Deschamps’ work was published only a few years before the French Revolution and it appears likely that it was written amidst the growing political tension throughout Western Europe.

Nineteenth Century

By the turn of the century the ‘virtuous death’ maintained its popularity throughout Europe. Thus, in 1811, the French sculptor David d’Angers, early in his career, won the Grand Prix of Rome award for his bas-relief of the death of Epameinondas (Fig. 6). Only a year later (1812), the Italian artist, Bartolomeo Pinelli (1781-1835), painted another Death: this was done in a more minimalist fashion, utilizing only brown and grey colours, though the scene is no less stirring than previous attempts (Fig. 7). Again, the scene was also depicted by the Belgian painter Louis Gallait (1810-1870) in 1850. In terms of subject matter, these works are scarcely different from their eighteenth century predecessors (Fig. 8). It now becomes difficult to determine the source material, but it is clear that the symbol of Epameinondas’ death continued to be recognized as the ultimate example of civic virtue.

In continuance of this, across the Atlantic, the American educated elite also showed appreciation for the general: at Harvard, in the Memorial Hall (completed 1878), a building intended to honour members of the university who had been killed during the American Civil War, a series of stained glass windows were commissioned at various times depicting pairs of famous historical and mythological figures. Thus, in 1879, Daniel Cottier, payed for by the class of 1857, produced a diptych pairing Epameinondas with Sir Philip Sidney (1554-1586), who was killed at the Battle of Zutphen (Fig. 9). As well as this, Sidney’s education and artistic endeavours are also a clear point of comparison with the Theban, illustrating the ideal
of the patriotic, yet erudite, soldier. The depiction of the general is remarkably similar to Scheemakers statue from the previous century.

The tradition of civic virtue was also reiterated in the realms of public performance with the play *Epaminondas, Tragédie Patriotique. En Cinq Actes et en Vers* (1833) by Louis-Marie Perenon. This work was written in the wake of the First Canut Revolt (1831), in Lyon, after which the ringleaders were charged with treason but eventually acquitted. Like with Deschamp’s earlier work, this play is about Epameinondas’ trial of 369 for which Perenon was clearly trying to create a parallel.

An exception in the traditional presentation of Epameinondas comes from a poem written in the guise of Lord Byron, though the author is unknown, called *Don Leon*. Probably written around 1833 and first appearing in the late 30s, early 40s, the poem is a stern and lengthy defence of homosexuality and an attack on its illegality.  

The sentiment criticizes the standard portrayal of the general and alludes to the hypocrisy inherent in glorifying a figure who, according to popular English opinion of the time, ought to be decried for his sexual leanings. The point here is not that Epameinondas should be condemned, but that contemporary English people should not condemn homosexuals, particularly when they are happy to glorify the ancient Greeks.

*The Twentieth Century to Today*

By the turn of the twentieth century we see something of a drop in depictions of, or even reference to, Epameinondas outside of the academic world. However, a few exceptions are conspicuous: as quoted above, the famous American general, George S. Patton (1885-1945), clearly admired the ancient Theban and may even have been influenced by many of

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1291 On *Don Leon* see Crompton (1983), 53-72.
1292 [Byron] (1866), 11.
Epameinondas’ notions of warfare.\textsuperscript{1293} The name of Epameinondas was also used by Sarah Cone Bryant in her children’s book, \textit{Epaminondas and His Auntie}, first published in 1907. This work portrays a heavily stereotyped black boy named Epaminondas, who, due to his own apparent incompetence or stupidity constantly makes a mess of each situation he is presented with.\textsuperscript{1294} The use of the general’s name here is an echo of the trend of slaves to be named after famous historical figures; however, the similarity with the ancient general stops here.\textsuperscript{1295} Throughout the rest of this century there are surely a number of other uses of the figure of Epameinondas, though few are apparent. A late example comes in the form of the board game, \textit{Epaminondas}, by Robert Abbott, released in 1975. The games is intended to work similarly to phalanx warfare and its name is a sure recognition of the Theban’s mastery over said style of combat.

The current century may have seen a subtle increase in appreciation of Epameinondas. An interesting example of this comes from the television show \textit{Time Commanders} (2003), which used the game engine of the strategy game, \textit{Rome: Total War}. The show attempts to re-create historical battles using members of the general public (i.e. without backgrounds in warfare or military history), while commentary is provided by experts. Season one, episode 10 is on the Battle of Leuctra in which a netball team takes on the role of the Boeotian army against the Spartans. Interestingly the team recognizes the need to attack the Spartan elite head on but makes the mistake of withholding the Sacred Band as a reserve unit.

Epameinondas has also appeared as a fictional character in a number of recent books from as early as the 1990s: in David Gemmell’s \textit{Lion of Macedon} (1990) a young Parmenion is presented as the brains behind the tactics at Leuctra. Historian Victor Hanson fictionalized Leuctra in his book, \textit{The End of Sparta: A Novel} (2011) and the battle has been most recently portrayed in the graphic novel, \textit{Serpent and Prey} (2018) by Adrian K. Briggs et al. The latter appears very much in the style of, and as a counterweight to, Frank Miller’s \textit{300} (1998): the Spartans now take on the role of the villains and are depicted needlessly brutal to the

\textsuperscript{1293} See above, 2. Hanson (1999), 283, notes that other Generals at Normandy in World War II were not likely to have heard of Epameinondas.
\textsuperscript{1294} Bryant (1976).
\textsuperscript{1295} See Richards (2009), 31-32.
innocent inhabitants of Boeotia, while Epameinondas and Pelopidas are presented as military geniuses; though with an air of arrogance, which may in fact be an accurate characterization. It is apparent that late twentieth and early twenty-first century interest in Epameinondas has more or less focused on his military ingenuity.

It is clear that Epameinondas has been a very influential figure throughout history since his death, though it took nearly a generation before he was widely recognized as the mastermind behind the Theban Hegemony. By the Roman period he was usually praised for his virtuous conduct. Indeed, this theme would be rekindled during the Renaissance, particularly influenced by his representation in the works of Plutarch. Thus, Epameinondas was used as a didactic model for the paradigmatic military leader. This conception of the general continued into the nineteenth century but appears to have all but disappeared by the following century. Epameinondas is largely known now only for his military endeavours, but public interest may in fact be on the rise.
Appendix II:
ΣYN Coinage and the Herakliskos Drakonopignon Type

The elusive ΣΥΝ coinage is a series of silver staters from a number of different poleis (predominantly Aegean and Propontic) depicting the infant Heracles strangling two snakes on the obverse (Fig. 10). On each of these the legend ΣΥΝ is included, which has generally been interpreted to be an abbreviation of ΣΥΝΜΑΧΩΝ or ΣΥΝΜΑΧΙΚΟΝ, which appears to imply a formal alliance between the states. The reverses depict types characteristic of each city, generally also including their ethnics. The known members include Byzantium, Cyzicus, Ephesus, Samos, Cnidus, Rhodes and Iasus. Because this alleged alliance is nowhere attested in the historical record various theories concerning its chronology and historical context have been proposed: Waddington argued for between the Battle of Cnidus in 394, in which Sparta lost their momentum in the Aegean, and their recovery in 391. This would indicate that the alliance was formulated contra to Spartan imperial ambitions. In light of the discovery of the Byzantine mint Regling further argued that the league must have continued after the capture of Byzantium by Thrasybulus in 389. Thus, a commonly accepted dating places it from the Battle of Cnidus to the King’s Peace (i.e. 394-387/6). However, following this Meyer and Beloch have both preferred the period directly after the King’s Peace and, later still, Hiquily pushed the dates to between 367 and 364, associating the coins with Epameinondas’ naval voyage. In 1956 Cawkwell argued against the latter arguments in favour of Waddington’s original dating of 394. Against this, Cook then assembled an interesting argument for a dating of 391/0, making the symmachia pro-Spartan. But, of course, it was not long before Cawkwell came back

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1296 Though generally overlooked, Kraay (1984), 8-9, proposed that the abbreviation is actually short for ΣΥΝΤΑΞΙΣ or ΣΥΝΤΕΛΕΙΑ, which would imply that the coins were minted for the purpose of tribute rather than a military alliance. However, as I argue, the use of Herakliskos drakonopignon type does indeed imply a military unison.
1297 Waddington (1863), 223-235.
1298 Regling (1906), 207-214.
1300 Meyer (1913), 308, 310; Beloch (1922), 95 n. 3.
1301 Hiquily and Ephraim (1948), 1-6.
1302 Cook (1961), 66-72.
with a rebuttal. Unfortunately, even at this stage, the end of the debate was not in sight: in 1980 Karwiese argued that the league was created as a result of Lysander’s establishment of decarchies in the Aegean in 405, thus again bringing a pro-Spartan, anti-Athenian, character to the coinage. This last contribution has generally been accepted by scholars since, though with some exception.

Other potential members of the alliance have been proposed: Lampsacus, Croton and Thebes. These all minted coins from the period using a very similar Heracles type (Herakliskos drakonopignon). The Lampsacene mints are clearly of an almost identical type with the ΣΥΝ coins and have reasonably been dated to the same period. Because of the city’s location in the Hellespont (making an excellent waypoint between the Propontic and Aegean cities), they are generally thought, with some caution, to have been part of the alliance. However, since the coins do not bear the ΣΥΝ legend, Kraay argued that Lampsacus had instead copied the type in order to “commend the staters to a wide variety of users”. On this it should be noted that the Rhodian mint does not bear the legend either but is indisputably considered part of the league.

In parallel with these we also find drakonopignon type coins from southern Italy. These include a series of staters with the head of Apollo on the obverse and a diobol, the obverse of which depicts the head of a female with an olive sprig. On each of these the ethnic for Croton is provided and they have been generally dated to between the years 400-325. To the following century we have further coins minted with the drakonopignon type: a number of diobols from Tarentum have been found, which have been dated to around 280-228, all with varying Athena heads on the obverse. In addition to this, another drakonopignon type diobol has been found, which was minted in Heraclea Italia, depicting an Athena obverse. This one has been more specifically placed in the early Pyrrhic period.

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1303 Cawkwell (1963), 152-154.
1304 Karwiese (1980), 1-27.
1306 Cawkwell (1956), 69; Cook (1971), 70; Jenkins (1972), 126-127; Karwiese (1980), 16.
1307 Kraay (1976), 259.
1308 Rutter (2001), 2157-2158.
around 281-278.\[1310\] The earlier mints have been associated with the formation (or reinvigoration) of the Italiote League with Croton as the hegemon, dated by Diodorus to 393 (Diod. 14. 91. 1).\[1311\] This league was established in order to check the expansion of Dionysius I of Syracuse into southern Italy. With the fall of Croton, however, the heart of the league was moved further north under the hegemony of Tarentum. It is quite possible that the drakonopignon coins from the third century were minted for a similar revamp of the league in the face of the encroaching Roman Empire.\[1312\]

At Thebes the type goes back further in the city’s history: the first were silver staters, dated to the second half of the fifth century,\[1313\] depicting a very similar Heracles figure, who is kneeling and facing to his right. Then, by 395-387 (according to Head’s dating), another stater was minted, depicting another drakonopignon with Heracles now crouching and facing his left. Also, to this period is attributed a mint of electrum coins with Heracles crouching but facing his right (Fig. 11). However, a recent study has convincingly argued that the electrum coins more correctly belong to the mid 360s and were minted in conjunction with the Theban naval project.\[1314\] This means that Thebes utilized the drakonopignon type at three very different stages in its history, each being multiple decades apart. It is possible that the original minting was prompted to celebrate (or commemorate) the restoration of Theban control of Boeotia around 446 in the face of Athenian expansion. It has also been suggested that the second mint was related to the ΣΥΝ League, though this is far from certain.\[1315\] If this was not the case, the coins could have been minted in the 390s in the

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\[1310\] Rutter (2001), 1422.
\[1311\] Rutter (1979), 61-63.
\[1312\] The nature of the Italiote leagues, i.e. whether or not there was some form of continuation throughout the fifth to third century is a matter for debate, though, once it was initially formed, its precedence was undoubtedly enduring throughout the period. See Wonder (2012), 128-151; Fronda (2015), 386-402, for various interpretations.
\[1313\] Dated by Head (1881), 208, to the period between 446-426.
\[1314\] Gartland (2013), 23-32.
\[1315\] Kraay (1976), 113, 248 n. 3. Cawkwell (1956), 74, dismisses this possibility since the Theban mint was smaller and of the Aeginetic standard. However, like with the Rhodian and Lampasacene coins, uniformity was not a necessity and the Thebans could have minted theirs at a separate date and for a separate purpose, but the comparison with the ΣΥΝ coins can hardly have been lost on the Thebans (or vice versa); therefore, some connection is probable. Gartland (2013), 26, has also disputed any Theban involvement in the league (though this is in reference to the electrum coins) since there is no evidence of any involvement with the relevant cities at this time. Thebes also directly opposed Lysander's expansionism at this time (this point holds assuming Karwiese's dating is correct). But, as Gartland himself admits, in 405, Thebes was still mostly pro-Spartan and its inclusion in the league, even if only on the periphery, is still possible.
face of Spartan expansionism and the rise of the anti-Spartan party at Thebes. Then, in the 360s, the electrum coins could have been employed in an attempt to reignite this connection with the members of the ΣYN League through the thematic use of the drakonopignon type.

Finally, from the fifth century, Cyzicus produced an electrum mint depicting Heracles and Iphicles struggling with a snake and, later, a hecte was minted that compares with the ΣYN type. While the dating of these coins is far from certain they probably fit somewhere in the latter half of the century.\textsuperscript{1316} While not enough is known about the city during this period to make any definitive assertions, this earlier mint may have been connected with anti-Athenian sentiment. The parallel here with the later ΣYN coins was surely not lost upon the Cyzicene.

Overall, it is generally agreed that the theme of Herakliskos drakonopignon symbolizes the triumph of good over evil or, more specifically, resistance against an oppressor.\textsuperscript{1317} We can also observe that, in addition to this, the type was commonly used to acknowledge the formation of an alliance or a league. It is therefore wholly possible that Thebes’ electrum coins from the 360s utilized this specific type to remind the previous members of the ΣYN League of their past connection with one another against the oppression of either the Athenians or the Spartans, depending on how one dates the alliance.

\textsuperscript{1316} Karwiese (1980), 13-14.
\textsuperscript{1317} Head (1911), 97; Cawkwell (1956), 69; Karwiese (1980), 14; Gartland (2013), 24-25. This idea is further illustrated in the famous painting by Zeuxis of Heraclea (Plin. \textit{Nat. Hist.} 35.36).
Figures and Maps

Map 1: Boeotian South Coast (Google Maps)

Map 2: Boeotian North Coast (Google Maps)
Fig. 1: *The Death of Epaminondas* (1726) by Isaac Walraven

Fig. 2: *The Death of Epaminondas* (1771) by Benjamin West
Fig. 3: The Death of General Wolfe (1770) by Benjamin West

Fig. 4: The Death of Chevalier Bayard (1772) by Benjamin West
Fig. 5: Statue of Epameinondas in the Temple of Ancient Virtue (1737) by Peter Scheemakers.

Fig. 6: The Death of Epaminondas (1811) by David d’Angers
Fig. 7: *The Death of Epaminondas* (1812) by Bartolomeo Pinelli

Fig. 8: *The Death of Epaminondas* (1850) by Louis Gallait
Fig. 9: *Sidney and Epaminondas* (1879) by Daniel Cottier

Fig. 10: ΣYN Tridrachm from Samos, c. 405/4 B.C.
Fig. 11: Theban Electrum Hemidrachm, dated 395 B.C.
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